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LIFE OF

REV. RICHARD KNILL.

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"The biographer has performed his office with judgment and fidelity, and has given us a condensed account of one of the most useful ministers of his age. He has left him to speak for himself and tell his own story. . . . . Such a man's life should be a study. . . . I am not without hope that this volume has its mission to stir us up to a spirit like his own." . . . . . .

"The man who writes one good, popular, useful religious tract has done a work worth living for, though he did nothing else. There is a time coming when the author of the "Swearer's Prayer" (Mr. Knill) will have more joy in his simple leaflet than Milton in the production of "Paradise Lost."—REV. J. A. JAMES' REVIEW.

. . . . . .

"I think it probable that with these few notes on dear Knill's life and labours, I shall lay down my pen, which has written much."—REV. J. A. JAMES to the Editor on the day before his death.

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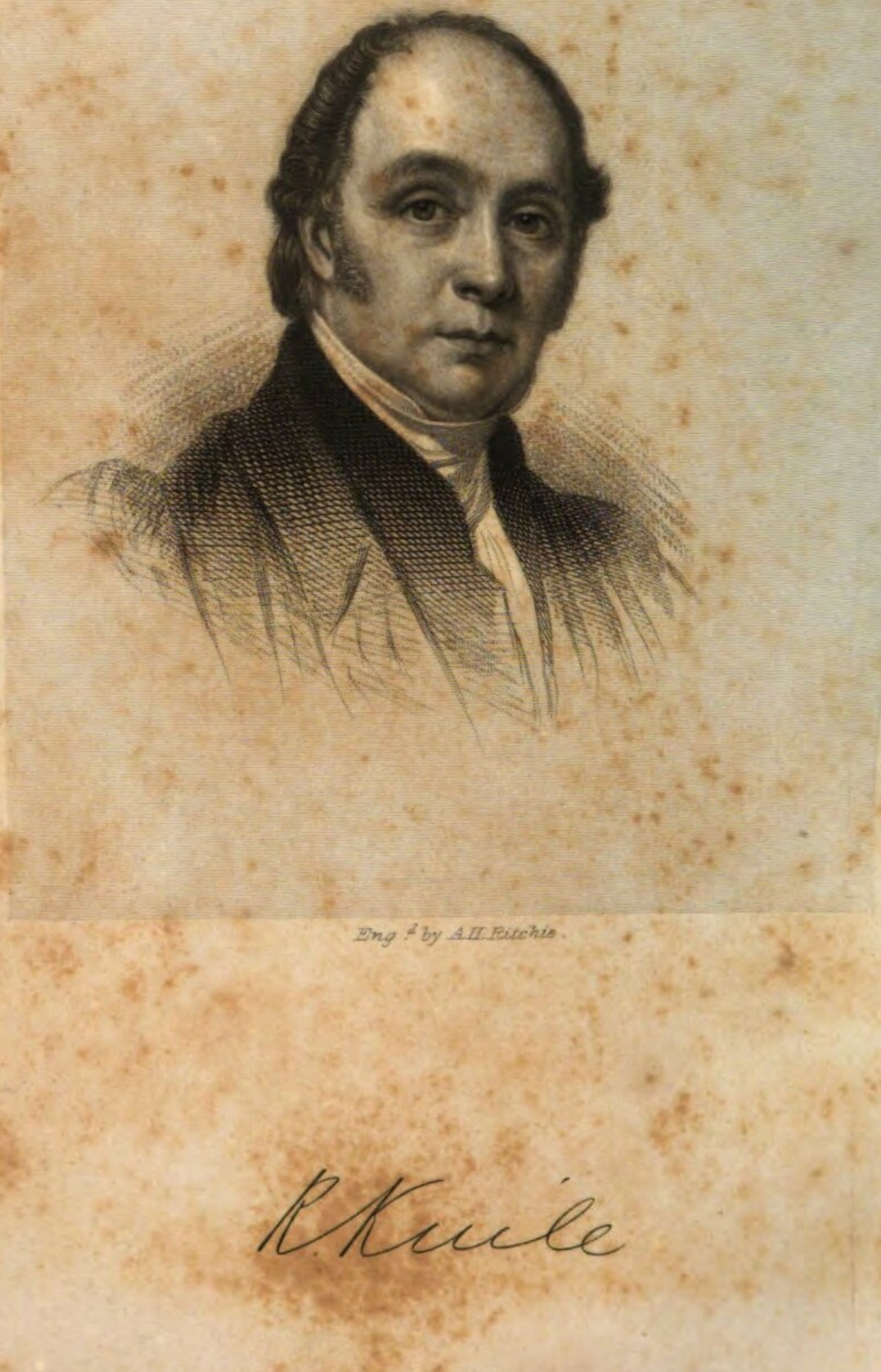

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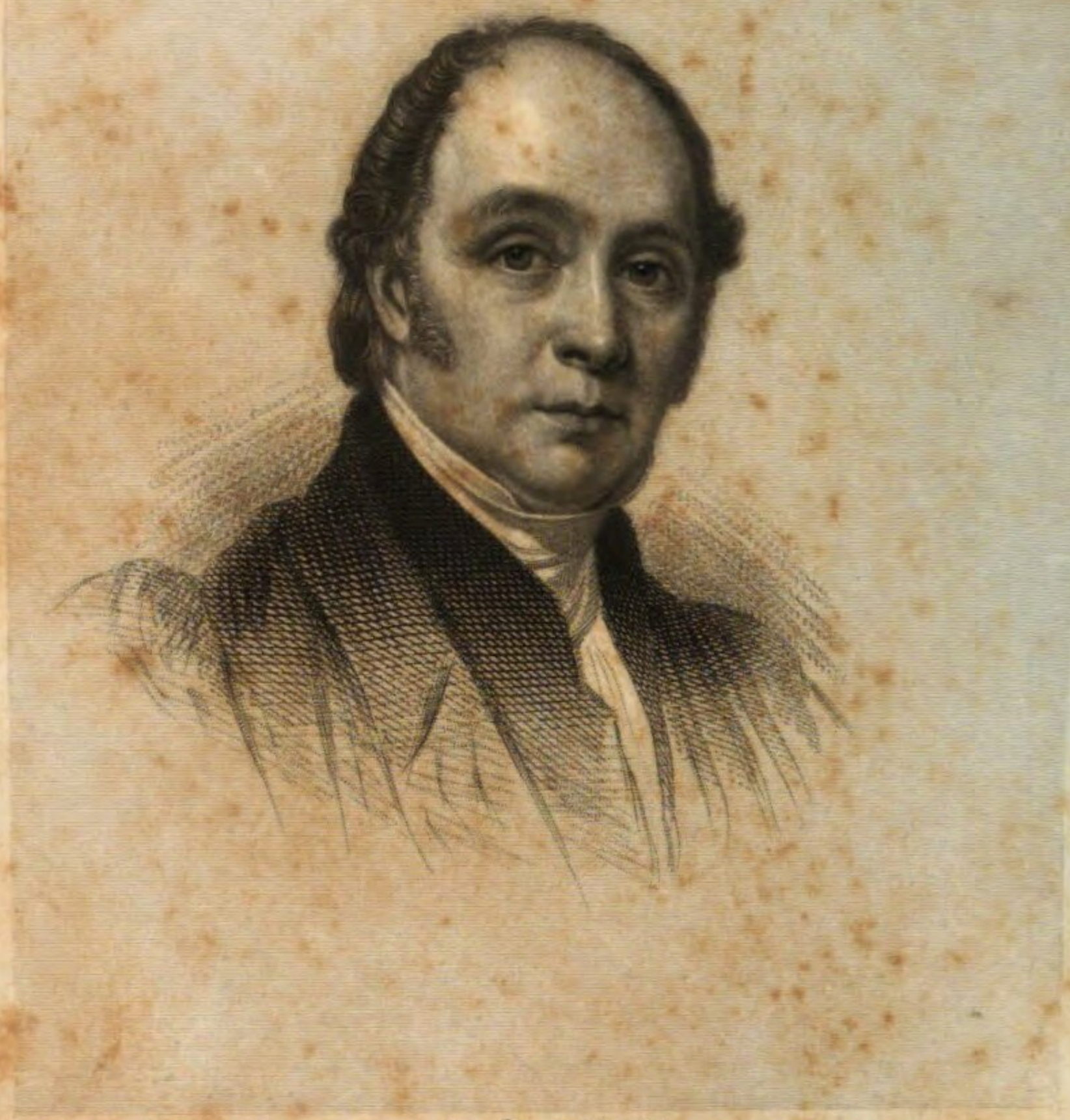

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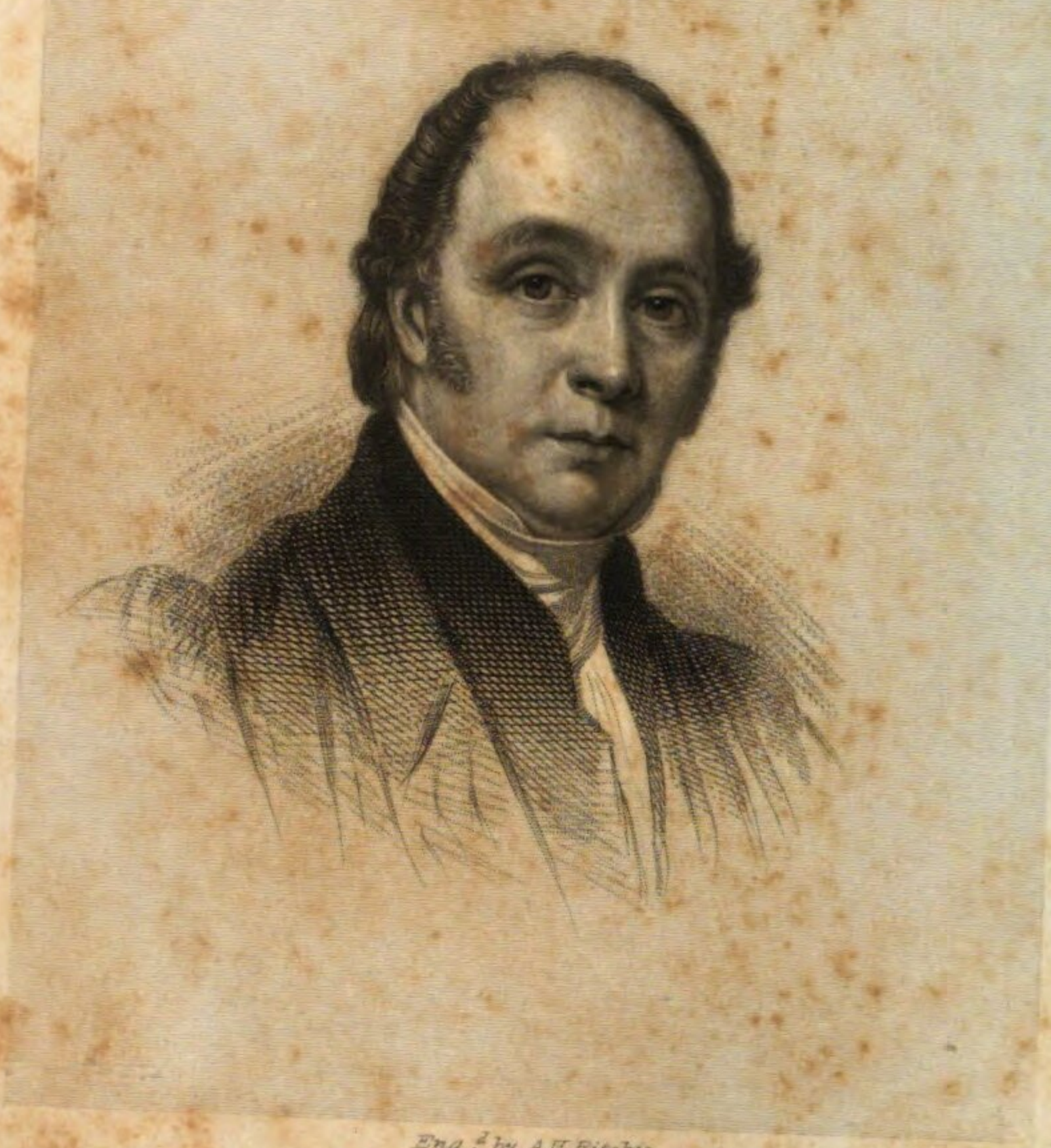

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THE LIFE

OF THE

REV. RICHARD KNILL,

OF ST. PETERSBURG:

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM HIS REMINISCENCES, JOURNALS, AND CORRESPONDENCE.

BY

CHARLES M. BIRRELL.

WITH A REVIEW OF HIS CHARACTER, BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

NEW YORK:
ROBERT CARTER AND BROTHERS,
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1860.

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PREFACE.

THE personal reminiscences which form the basis of this narrative were penned during some periods of silence appointed to the venerable writer towards the close of his life. The hope, however, which was at first entertained, of presenting them to the reader as an untouched composition, could not be realized, as they were found, on close examination, to be marked by chronological inaccuracies, and the omission of some interesting passages of his history. The Editor, although he had the happiness of witnessing Mr. Knill's manner of life in the foreign capital which enjoyed so large a share of his labours, as well as the privilege of frequent communication with him during his residence in the English city in which his useful career closed, did not judge himself competent to complete the story; but a large supply of letters and several volumes of journals having promised to supply the

deficiencies of the original sketch, he attempted to unite all the documents in a continuous narration, which should retain, as much as possible, the character of an autobiography.

At a period when there are signs of an increased desire on the part of Christians to seize the opportunities of usefulness which occur in common life, the example of one, who, though occupying a public position, was distinguished for the devoutness, vigilance, and success with which he applied the interviews of the home and the wayside to the loftiest topics, will not, it is hoped, be unseasonable, nor, by the Divine blessing, without fruit.

The fervent and discriminating application of the moral lessons of the book made in the concluding pages by an author who has laid this generation under so great obligations—whose words prompted the earliest serious thoughts, and guide the mature labours of so many amongst us—will, it is believed, be accepted by the reader, as it has been by the Editor, with sincere gratitude.*

EDGE HILL, LIVERPOOL,
1*st October*, 1859.

* See Postscript, page **355.**

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CHAPTER I.

Early Days.

"More servants wait on man
Than he 'll take notice of: in every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him."

HERBERT.

EARLY DAYS.

If the reader, in the course of a summer excursion, have sailed along the fine southern shore of the Bristol Channel, and, passing the rocks of Lynton and Ilfracombe, have turned into the Bay of Bideford to meet the tide of the "two notable rivers" which, in the words of Risdon, the antiquary, "there, hand in hand, with mutual affection, slip into the sea," he must have noticed two plains of considerable extent, stretching from the sea-line to the foot of the wooded hills. The one on the right hand, being guarded by the singular ocean-built breakwater, known as the "Pebble-Ridge," presents a noble sheet of pasturage for the flocks of the neighbouring farms; while the one on the left hand, though not so verdant, covers the forest of a former time, in which, according to the firm testimony of tradition, a hardy preacher of the fourth century

proclaimed the gospel. The determined zeal and fruitful toils of this primitive evangelist have imprinted his name on the parish church of St. Braunock's, as well as on the village or township of Braunton, which lies embosomed in orchards in a picturesque adjacent valley.

In the modern community of this place, the father of the missionary whose life is delineated in the following pages held a somewhat prominent position. He inherited from his ancestors, who had been known for many generations in the parish, a capacity for nearly all kinds of business. His original trade was that of a carpenter, but, by the help of a small patrimony, he gradually relinquished that occupation for pursuits more agreeable to his discursive genius. While he would occasionally plan and work at the construction of a house, he would be found equally at home valuing the timber of an estate, selling a farming stock, making the draught of a lease, or drawing up the will and testament of a dying neighbour. These useful services, united with a tall person, a benevolent countenance, and a goodly wig, procured for him the familiar but respectful

title of "The Counsellor." He married Mary Tucker, a woman of superior education and excellent judgment, the daughter of a substantial neighbouring farmer, distinguished for kindness to the poor and general hospitality.

Richard, named after his father, the youngest of their four children, was born at Braunton, on the 14th April, 1787. The only incident of his childhood which has come down to us was one which nearly cost him his life. On his way to school, the boy had to cross a stream spanned by a bridge of two flat stones. On attempting one day to ascertain how far he could push a stick under this structure, he overbalanced himself and fell in. The splash reached the ear of a poor widow, carding wool by her cottage door. On looking up, she spied a child's hat on the surface of the stream, and, darting to the spot, drew the little owner, by his flaxen locks, from under the bridge. Molly Robins was never forgotten by Mr. Knill. "She could not read," he would say characteristically, "but she saved my life: feeble powers, if well employed, will do wonders."

Braunton owed little to its religious instruc-

tors. Its inhabitants generally lived in moral darkness, though, in addition to the parish church, it had had a community of Nonconformists from the earliest period possible after the Act of Uniformity in 1662. The parents of Richard Knill resembled their neighbours, and were not prepared, at the time when he was committed to their charge, to direct him in the path of life.

"But," says he, in the reminiscences, which shall now be largely quoted, "God remembered them in their low estate. A young man, named Joseph Evans, the son of a farmer, who had been for some years in Barnstaple, came home and opened a shop. He gave notice to a few of his friends that he should have a religious service at his house on Sunday evenings. It was much ridiculed by the people generally, but my beloved mother, who had known Mr. Evans from a child, attended his meeting. There the Holy Ghost applied the word with such power to her soul that she could not stay away. The Lord Jesus Christ became very precious. She rejoiced with joy unspeakable. My father was highly displeased

at this; and I never recollect his speaking unkindly to my mother, except about this change in her religion. But she sought comfort in prayer; and would often take me with her into her chamber, and say, 'Kneel down with me, my dear, and I will pray with *you;* your father and your brothers will not join me.' I wondered why she wept so, and where she got such remarkable prayers for my father and the family; but I understand it now, and I have good reason to believe that her prayers for them have been answered, and that she has met them all in heaven, except myself, and I trust, through rich, distinguishing grace, she will meet me there also. Blessed be God for a praying mother."

"In my thirteenth year," he continues, "I was apprenticed to business, and in my seventeenth year finished my apprenticeship, and went abroad into the wide world to make my fortune. I proceeded to Ilfracombe, and Barnstaple, and Bristol, for improvement, and so far I succeeded; but I cannot look back to these early travels without a pang. 'Evil communications corrupt good manners.' In

the midst of wicked old men, and wicked young men, I forgot the prayers of my pious mother, and became fond of singing foolish songs, and breaking the Sabbath, thus stifling the voice of conscience, and fighting against God; and all this before I was twenty. My fondness for music was a great snare to me. The devil often took advantage of it to lead me into company. At last I began to fancy that if I enlisted into the militia I should soon get into the band, and then it would be music and songs all the year round. Accordingly, I enlisted. This nearly broke my mother's heart. 'Now,' said she, '*body and soul are lost;* oh! what can be done?' Mr. Evans, the dear friend who led my mother to Jesus, called on my parents to sympathise with them, and offered to try and procure my discharge. Their hearts were full of joy at his offer. Mr. Evans immediately waited on Colonel Bevis, an intimate friend of Earl Fortescue, the Lord-Lieutenant of the country. He told the colonel the story, described the feelings of my parents, and offered any money that might be needful. 'I will do it,' said the colonel; 'but you must

get a substitute, and keep Knill out of the way until the matter is settled.' It was a mighty struggle,* but it succeeded ; and it is affecting for me to know, that the young man who became my substitute soon volunteered into 'the regulars,' and was killed in the heat of battle ; perhaps, as my mother said about me, '*body and soul were lost.*'

"During the proceedings with the colonel, I was shut up. Mr. Evans gave me a room, and I came down night and morning at family prayer. This was a new and strange scene to me. I had never been present at a family prayer in my life. The first night that I was in this good man's house, about nine o'clock he rang the bell, and his shopmen and servants all came in to the parlour and sat down. I looked with surprise, and wondered what was coming next. When all were seated, he opened

* The mighty struggle is said, by an early companion of Mr. Knill, to have arisen in part from the dissatisfaction of the major with the substitute accepted by the colonel. Knill, being upwards of six feet high, had been placed among the grenadiers, but the substitute being shorter could not occupy his place. The colonel insisting on his right to admit a man of the minimum height, produced a permanent coolness between himself and his brother officer.

his Bible and read a portion, and thus let God speak to his household. They then arose and fell upon their knees. The sight overpowered me. I trembled; I almost fainted. At last I kneeled down too. I thought of my past life; I thought of my present position; I thought, Can such a guilty creature be saved? I heard but little of my kind friend's prayer. All my soul seemed turned in upon myself. My conscience said—'This is how true Christians live; but how have I lived? God has not been in all my thoughts; but now I will begin to seek mercy.'

"I went to bed that night as I never had gone before. On entering the room, I looked around for a Bible, but found none. There was a copy of 'Doddridge's Hymns' on the table, some verses of which I read on my knees, by the bed-side, and then poured out my heart in broken prayers, and went to bed. This was just when I had completed my twentieth year. I have never gone to Barnstaple of late years, without going to weep over the hallowed spot where God fastened the arrows of conviction in my heart."

"There was from that time," he writes in 1812, "a great alteration in my outward conduct, and I could not commit sin without stings of conscience; yet I was a stranger to that godly sorrow which worketh 'repentance which needeth not to be repented of.'" But a new residence was to conduct to a glorious change. "Mrs. Isaac, of Bideford," he says, "wanted a person to conduct her business, and to instruct her only son, a youth a little younger than myself. I was recommended to her, and agreed to go."

For some time after this removal, which occurred in March, 1808, he continued to attend the services of the Established Church either at Braunton or at Bideford, but gave no indications of religious progress until he made the acquaintance of Mr. Thomas Spencer, a young man who resided next door to him. Mr. Spencer, while walking in his master's garden, repeatedly heard his neighbour's fine voice in song, and conceived that it would be of service both to the congregation and to himself if he could induce him to attend the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Rooker. In this he happily suc-

ceeded. The songs of the world were exchanged for those of Zion, and every week the ministry of Mr. Rooker served to bring some fresh meaning to his strains. "Mr. Rooker," it is said in the reminiscences, "was a holy man of God and a sound theologian, deeply read in the old divines. A hungry soul could feed and thrive on his ministry, and an inquiring spirit could find rest. It was just what I needed for nursing my incipient piety, expanding my religious views, and fitting me for active service."

The church was at this period, it seems, in a languid state—inclined to repose on the tradition of former prosperity, and on the reputation of its then recently deceased pastor, the Rev. Samuel Lavington. Mr. Rooker had succeeded this excellent man, his father-in-law, as the sole pastor of the church, about three years before, and was anxiously desiring better times. A sermon which he preached at the celebration of the jubilee of George III, on the 25th of October, 1809, was accompanied by an unusual impression; and a report of it, from Mr. Knill's pen, having found its way into the

preacher's hands, he was led to seek the acquaintance of the writer, and to begin a life-long friendship fraught with rich blessings.

It was about eight months after this incident that the two friends, Knill and Spencer, sought admission into the church. They were hailed by Mr. Rooker in a fine paternal address, founded on the words, "I have drawn thee with cords of love and with the bands of a man," and the impulse which the little community received from the accession was of the happiest description. Meetings for devotional purposes, which had subsided into formality, were revived; and "there was," says a contemporary, "an earnestness, an unction, and a breathing after holiness in Mr. Knill's prayers which went to the hearts of others." A Sunday-school had existed for some years under the care of an illiterate teacher, and had been reduced to an almost nominal attendance, when, about a fortnight after the addition of the new members, Mr. Rooker proposed that the then novel system of voluntary instruction should be tried. Knill and his companion seized the idea, and threw their new-born en-

ergies into the work. The poor old teacher's salary was continued; but a staff of young persons of both sexes assumed the duties, and the school sprung into a new existence.*

The anniversaries of the institution were seasons of great interest, which the pastor watchfully applied to the highest ends. His discourse on the 20th of Sept., 1811, deserves particular commemoration. As a contrast to the advantages of an early Christian education, he read some passages from "Buchanan's Christian Researches in the East," a book which was then awakening great attention in the country. As he went over the thrilling

* For several particulars in this part of the narrative, the Editor is indebted to an interesting paper relative to the origin of the Bideford Sunday-schools, drawn up by a lady who was one of the first teachers, and who happily survives to maintain her early habits of usefulness. A curious illustration of the difficulties encountered in those times is thus given:—"Mr. Newcomen, an eminently pious and benevolent man, of good property, having read of Joseph Lancaster's plan of educating children by mutual instruction, ordered the books and lessons with the view of establishing such a school in Bideford; but being told it would injure the poor old women who got their living by teaching children, and who could not earn a subsistence in any other way, he relinquished the attempt."

picture of the pilgrims to Juggernaut, and recounted facts which some judged too revolting for the ears of an English auditory, one of the teachers, sitting in the aisle at the head of his class, was noticed with large moistened eyes fixed on the preacher, and his manly open countenance beaming with mingled wonder and compassion. "It was," said he, long afterwards, "like a spark on tinder. It set me on fire to go to the heathen. I did not know of missionary societies, but my thoughts were set to work, and I borrowed books and informed my mind on the subject. I was afraid to mention my impressions to my pastor, but they smouldered until the Lord's time came."

Mr. Knill, in later life, communicated to a small periodical an account of an incident, which it is difficult to imagine as having occurred at this advanced period of his profession; but the most careful comparison of events does not admit of its earlier insertion. If this is its proper place, it will afford a warning all the more striking to young persons of a social and trusting temperament. On his way to the school one Sabbath morn-

ing, he was met by three of his former companions, who said they were bound on an excursion up the river, on which the early sun was beautifully gleaming. Partly by sarcasm and partly by entreaty, they induced him to join their party. The boat glided up the stream, and had scarcely shut out the town behind the richly-wooded banks, when "the church bell rung out," the narrator says, "signifying to the inhabitants that it was nine o'clock, and that, by and by, divine service would commence. The sound of the bell vibrated sweetly on the undulating wave, and produced a tranquillizing effect on three of the party, but to the fourth it was perfect agony. Perhaps a poor condemned criminal, on the morning of his execution, hears the prison-clock strike which warns him of the fatal hour, with just the same feelings as this young man heard the nine o'clock bell. That well-known sound had been to him, for months past, the signal for commencing the Sunday-school, and now the whole of the Sunday-school proceedings spread out before the eye of his mind. His conscience was very busy: the

Spirit set his guilty conduct in terrible array before him. He fancied he heard the children sing, the teacher pray, the school business begin, and every man at his post but one, and that was himself. In vain did his companions laugh, and banter him, and try to cheer him. No—God had smitten him ; and a wounded spirit who can bear ? They had taken some musical instruments with the mwith an intention to play ; but his harp was now unstrung, and the whole day was spent by him in perfect misery. If he could have jumped ashore he would have done it, but he could not ; yet one thing he did, and it was worth doing. He solemnly resolved never to break the Sabbath again, and never more to associate with those who fear not God, but to come out from among them and be separate ; and God has enabled him to perform this vow."

After this, his deepened convictions of duty found expression in various efforts after usefulness, one of which he thus describes :—" The North Devon Local Militia was about to be disbanded at Barnstaple. The regiment consisted of one thousand men, who were soon to

return to their families in almost every parish of the north division of the county. Mr. Mills, with whom I had become acquainted through the Barnstaple Sunday-school, said to me, 'What a noble opportunity there is for distributing religious tracts in all the dark villages around! The regiment will give us a thousand distributers, if we can only get them conveyed to the men.' I said, 'How can it be done?' To which he answered, 'I have not nerve enough to give the tracts to the soldiers; but I will furnish you with the tracts, if you will circulate them.' 'Agreed.' The tracts were obtained, and I set about my work. The men were assembled in the barrack-yard, waiting for the signal to deliver up their arms. I made my way to the Pioneers, who stood at the right, and said, 'Friends, will you take home a beautiful little book to your families?' They joyfully received them. I next came to the band. I took 'Christ the only Refuge from the Wrath to Come,' and offered it to the master. He looked at me, and said 'I understand that you go about converting people; can you convert me?' I replied, 'It is not in

my power to convert people; but if it were, the first person I would convert, sir, should be Serjeant Reynolds.' 'Well,' said he, 'that is plain enough.' 'Yes,' I added, 'and it is sincere too. Now, this tract may convert you, serjeant; it was written by that great man, Mr. Hervey, who wrote "Meditations among the Tombs."' 'Ah,' said he, 'I have read that book, and I will take your tract and read it too.' This was just what I wanted, for immediately all the musicians took tracts. I proceeded next to the grenadiers, who were all pleased, until I came to one merry-andrew kind of a fellow. He took the tract and held it up, swore at it, and asked, 'Are you going to convert me?' I said, 'Don't swear at the tract; you cannot hurt the tract, but swearing will injure your soul.' 'Who are you?' he exclaimed. 'Form a circle round him,' said he to his comrades, 'and I will swear at him.' They did so: he swore fearfully, and I wept. The tears moved the feelings of the other men, and they said, 'Let him go; he means to do us good.' So I distributed my thousand tracts, and left them in the care of Him who said, 'My word

shall not return unto me void.' Many years after I had taken leave of these soldiers, I returned from India to my native country, and visited Ilfracombe. There I was invited to preach in the open air, a few miles distant. Preparations were made for my visit; and during the time that I was preaching, I saw a tall, grey-headed man in the crowd, weeping, and a tall young man, who looked like his son, standing by his side, and weeping also. At the conclusion of the service, they both came up to me, and the father said, 'Do you recollect giving tracts to the local militia at Barnstaple some years ago?' 'Yes.' Do you recollect anything particular of that distribution?' 'Yes; I recollect one of the granadiers swore at me till he made me weep.' 'Stop,' said he; 'oh, sir, I am the man. I never forgave myself for that wicked act. But I hope it has led me to repentance, and that God has forgiven me. And now, let me ask, will you forgive me?' It quite overcame me for the moment, and we parted with a prayer that we might meet in heaven. Is not this encouragement? May we not well say, *one tract may save a soul?*"

The piety, tact, and courage which he thus early exhibited, awakened in the minds of Mr. Knill's friends the idea that he might be destined for the Christian ministry. The Rev. William Rooker, of Tavistock, brother of his excellent pastor, when on a visit to Bideford, asked him whether his desires tended towards that work. To this he replied, that while he scarcely dared to admit the fact, and could see no way of accomplishing such an object, the wish to be wholly consecrated to the publication of the gospel occupied all his thoughts. The path was soon opened; and he proceeded for classical and theological study to the Western Academy.

CHAPTER II.

Missionary Consecration.

"There's a voice upon the waters
Deeper than the sounding sea;
Zion! wake thy sons and daughters,
Heaven and earth are in the plea."

M. G. SAFFERY.

MISSIONARY CONSECRATION.

"The Western Academy is of ancient date among the colleges for Dissenters. It usually had eight students, partly supported by the King's Head Society in London, and partly from other sources. My honoured pastor interested himself deeply about me, and obtained my admission. It was at that time under the watchful care and instruction of the Rev. James Small, Axminster, Devon. Into this school of the prophets I was cordially welcomed in the autumn of 1812. It was a fine retired, happy place for those who wished to be happy in it. Many and great were its advantages. One of these was, that the students formed part of the family, took their meals at the family table, and kneeled around the family altar. The presence of ladies always has a refining effect on young men, who, in general, need refining. This privilege we

had. Mr. Small made a point of calling the students by name between five and six every morning, and a fine was levied on the person who was not down stairs before six o'clock. It gives me pleasure to recollect that I was never fined. I learned habits of punctuality which have been of use to me all through my life.

"In looking back on this movement, I feel that it is a very solemn matter for a young man of twenty-five to leave the business in which he has been brought up, and enter upon a life of study for the ministry. If he fail as a preacher he is ruined. His student's life has unfitted him for returning again to business, and in this way many excellent men, who would have shone in secular life, have been compelled to drag out a miserable existence. Ministers cannot be too cautious in recommending young men to our colleges."

"My Bideford friends considered it quite an era in the history of their Sunday-school, that one of their first teachers should become a minister. They loaded me with kindness on my departure, and always greeted me with

sweet fraternal affection at every subsequent return."

Nor did the young student fail to cherish tender reminiscences of these early friends and scenes. To his recent companion, Mr. Thomas Isaac, he writes from "Axminster," on the 9th February, 1814:—"The revolving season forcibly reminds me of my first acquaintance with you—an acquaintance which, I trust, will be strengthened and matured even to eternity. It is now just six years since that memorable hour—ever-memorable, indeed, *to me*. Instead of saying with Job (on another occasion), 'Let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months,' I would pray, 'Lord, let it be engraven on my heart in indelible characters,' for then I began to seek the Lord—then I began to live. I am astonished when I consider the innumerable mercies the Lord has conferred upon me since that period. Oh, that I could feel grateful as I ought!

"At times I can with great perspicuity trace the Lord's hand in leading me to live with you, in drawing me to hear that good man

Mr. Rooker preach the glorious gospel, in sweetly constraining me to attend the prayer-meeting, and at last in bringing me to this place. And cannot you behold it is the Lord's doing? Then lift up a song of praise for me."

At the midsummer vacation he returned for a short time to Bideford, and afterwards had the happiness of learning that his conversation had been the means of leading the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, whom he had frequently visited, to a life of devoted piety. The manner in which the decided character of this young person triumphed, by the power of God, over severe domestic persecution, and led to the conversion of her father and mother, and her brothers and sisters, as well as to the commencement and continued maintenance of evangelical light in a benighted parish, is strikingly depicted by Mr. Knill's own pen, in the little narrative called "The Farmer and his Family."

"On my return from Russia," he observes, in the reminiscences, "I went to visit the farm on which the family resided. The venerable father was sitting in his arm-chair in front of

the house, to see me arrive, and to give me the first welcome. As he approached me, with snow-white locks floating over his shoulders, he burst into tears, caught me by the hand, and with a faltering voice said, 'Dear Mr. Knill, we are a whole family going to heaven now, and Betsy has been the means of it all.'"

The period spent at Axminster was devoted to study, not in itself calculated to quicken the spiritual life; but his heart gave no sign of diminished sensibility. The peculiar ease which he afterwards displayed in touching and carrying with him the feelings of an auditory evinced itself even then, and under circumstances by no means such as predisposed to the expression of the emotions. It was the custom for the students, after the first year's residence, to read a discourse in turn for the criticism of their compeers and tutor. When under skilful guidance, there is probably no better training for the actual duty of the pulpit. On the first occasion when Mr. Knill submitted a production to this ordeal, he selected as his text, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ;"

and proceeded to illustrate the words from his own experience, and to urge the claims of Christ to the gratitude of redeemed men, with such force and pathos, that several of the students, forgetting their judicial character, were melted to tears. The conclusion was followed by a long pause, after which the president, observing the general impression, and drying his own tears, rose and left the room, saying, "Brethren, criticism is disarmed to-day."

In the month of April, 1814, a missionary meeting was held at Bridport, Dorset, a town about twelve miles distant from Axminster.

"Perhaps this was the first which had been held in that part of the country. Missionary meetings were great novelties then. I had never seen one, nor had any of my fellow-students. Happily for us the Rev. Mr. Saltern wrote to our tutor, inviting him over, and 'bring the students with you, sir,' said he; 'it may do them good. The Rev. Dr. Waugh of London is going to preach. I should like them to hear him.' So we all went to Bridport, and Dr. Waugh preached. He took for his text, 'It shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall

be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish.' His plan was to show, *first*, that the heathen were perishing, and that they could not help themselves; *second*, that God, in His boundless love, had provided a remedy for them—the 'blowing of the great trumpet.' Then he enlarged in his own peculiar manner on the gospel, and its adaptation to the wants of sinners; and after a grand display of evangelical truth, he paused, and said, 'My brethren, this great trumpet cannot blow itself, it must be sounded by men—redeemed, converted men—those who themselves have tasted the joys of pardoned sin, and who, from their own happy experience, can tell the heathen what a precious Saviour Jesus is. We want such men, and we must have them.' He then looked around, as if wishing to fix his piercing eye on some object, and in melting tones said, 'Is there in this congregation one young disciple of the Lord Jesus who has love enough in his heart to his Master, to say, "Lord, here am I, send me?"' I felt the appeal. It entered into my soul, and I silently said, 'Lord, I will go.' This was a solemn hour to me. I bless God for it,

and shall ever bless Him. The service ended, and the students were all invited to dine with the ministers; but I had no appetite for food. My heart was full. The family of our senior student, Mr. Hart, resided in Bridport, and from them I procured a little chamber, where I spent some hours alone in fasting and prayer. I have had that little room in my eye ten thousand times since, for there I spent some of the happiest moments of my life, in saying again to Him who redeemed me, 'Lord, I will go.'

"Mr. Small sent for me next morning to converse with me about it; and when he found what were my feelings, he wrote to the secretary of the London Missionary Society to make inquiries. In the meantime, I went home to consult my honoured parents, and to endeavour to obtain their sanction. I had given them trouble enough about the army, and I wished not to wound their feelings again. My father heard me with great patience, and said, 'I will throw no impediment in your way; but what will your mother say?' I thought I was sure on that point, for she loved Jesus more than Christians in general do; but I was mistaken. My

mother's feelings were too strong. She said, 'Richard, how can you think of leaving me? I am advancing in years, and I have always comforted myself with the hope that you would be with me to pray with me, and to cheer me when I shall pass through the valley of the shadow of death. I cannot give my consent. You should have seen me under the clods of the valley first.'

"Here I was driven to my wit's end. I knew that God never smiles on a son who breaks a parent's heart. I could expect no blessing if I disobeyed so good a mother. But she betook herself to prayer, and at last prayer prevailed. She prayed for days, and nights too; and one morning, as I met her at her chamber door, the tears were dried up. Her countenance was again tranquil, and she caught me round the neck, and with a mother's fond embrace, said,—'Now, my dear son, it is all settled; God has given me grace to say to you, Go; and I bless Him for putting it into your heart to go, and I adore Him for giving me an Isaac to offer on His altar. Go, my son, go;' and from that hour until the day that she died, she did nothing but cheer me."

That he had viewed the subject with as much prudence as zeal, may be gathered from a few lines to Mr. Walter Bowen of Bideford, dated Axminster, 16th April, 1814:—"Perhaps you have not forgotten that a spark of missionary fire was kindled in my bosom through the instrumentality of our dear Mr. Rooker; but now, sir, with unspeakable pleasure, I inform you that *spark* is blown into a *flame*—a flame which, I hope, and pray, and trust, will burn increasingly bright and clear till my pulse shall cease to beat, and my disembodied spirit join the spirits of the just made perfect, where the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

"I have signified my intention to my revered tutor, who readily acquiesced, and kindly offered to accelerate so desirable an object. As it is an unprecedented thing at Axminster Academy, Mr. Small has written to the committee (which I particularly solicited), in order that I might have an honourable acquittal from hence, without which principle would not suffer me to go. I expect to hear the result in a few days, when it will be forwarded to the

directors, and I hope my orders will soon arrive to go to Mr. Bogue's, Gosport, or wherever they may think proper to send me. After reading this, you may be ready to ask, 'Have you, my dear friend, thoroughly weighed the important matter?' I will tell you, sir. I have been in the habit of asking myself such questions as these :—

"Can you leave your dear parents?—This is, indeed, a hard question : the ties of natural affection bind me fast, and many other things, better conceived than expressed, press sore upon me for their sakes. But if Jesus calls, I must obey ; for 'he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.' Yes, I can leave my parents.

"Can you part with friends?—My friends are dear to me ; I love them with a Christian love, but I am not my *friends'*, yea, I am not my own, but *Christ's*. My friends could not purchase salvation for me, and I was totally incapable of effecting it myself ; surely I am bought with a price, and bound to glorify God in my body and my spirit, which are His. Yes, I can leave my friends.

"Can you leave the enjoyments of your native country?—The comforts I am favoured with here are very great, and flesh and blood say, 'Enjoy them a little longer.' But, O my soul, confer not with flesh and blood. As for soul enjoyments, they are derived from the visits of my dear Redeemer, and He can visit my soul in the remotest regions. John was banished on the Isle of Patmos, but there he enjoyed peculiar manifestations of the Divine favour. Paul and Silas were thrust into the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks, but Jesus drew near and caused them to burst into a song even at midnight. Then, O my soul, let the enjoyments of thy native country vanish when contemplating the glory of God in the salvation of the heathen. Yes, I can leave this, too.

"Are your bodily powers equal to the arduous undertaking?—My body, indeed, is weak, but the Master whom I serve is the preserver of body as well as spirit. He is the great Physician, and will make me immortal till my work is done. It is a useful life I wish for, whether long or short, and consequently I

devote all my powers to so good a cause. Then, such as my body is, Lord, I resign it to Thee; do with it as Thou pleasest. But, O my soul, the most important question remains to be answered: Art thou competent to so great, so arduous, so honourable a work?—Here stop and wonder. The prophet complained, 'Who hath believed our report?' and the apostle, under a sense of his weakness, exclaimed, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' And art thou greater than these? No; whilst I look to myself, I must despair; but while I look believingly to Jesus, then I am strong, knowing that I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. Then do not be discouraged; look to the promises, they are more than sufficient for thee, and His strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness. O blessed Jesus, here am I, send me!

'"Tis to my Saviour I would live,
To Him who for my ransom died.'"

The steps by which he closed this stage of his journey are indicated in the following communications—the first to Mr. Isaac, and the second to Mr. Rooker:-

"Axminster, 30th May, 1814.

. . . . "I have received a letter from Mr. Burder, secretary to the Missionary Society, which states a probability of my being sent for to visit Mr. Campbell in London, who is lately returned from the Cape. It is in contemplation, if I am accepted, to send me to the city of Lattakoo. Lord, support me! Believe me, my dear friend, I am almost overwhelmed, but I hope in His mercy, who has helped me hitherto. Entreat the sympathy and prayers of my dear Bideford friends, though I firmly believe I need not entreat them."

"Islington, London, 1st September, 1814.

"Being about to leave London to-morrow, and having learnt from experience your concern for me, I avail myself of the pleasure of sending you a little information. My journey was not a very agreeable one, though the weather was fine, the views delightful, and my business big with importance. But we arrived in town at half-past seven on Saturday morning, and shortly after I found myself in the house of a mother in Israel. Here, sir, I was

introduced to three brethren, a Dane, a Scotchman, and a Welshman. How refreshing the sight! How cheering their discourse! For though they spoke broken English, yet they spoke the language of Canaan fluently and sweetly. Oh, my dear Mr. Rooker, how full of joy is the hope of spending an eternity with some of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who shall all speak the same pure language, all join in the same harmonious song, and all unite in adoring our precious Redeemer.

"Last Monday, the committee met at Grocers' Hall, No. 8 Old Jewry, when Mr. Evans, the Welshman, and myself, were examined and approved: the other two had passed this before. It was resolved that we should all spend some time at Gosport—how long is not determined. Yesterday we were favoured with an interview with Mr. Campbell, at his own house. He kindly showed us a variety of curious things which he met with in his tour; he gave us a very pleasing and interesting account of his travels; he spoke in high terms of the salubrious air, the abundance of cattle, the beautiful

prospects, &c., which are peculiar to the neighbourhood of Lattakoo. He held up to view, also, a little of the dark side of the cloud; but we must go there to know it all.

"Most sincerely do I thank you, sir, and your dear people, for your great kindness to me at your prayer-meeting after I was gone; for valuable and numerous as the kindnesses are which I have received, both from minister and people, this outweighs them all."

CHAPTER III.

Putting on the Armour.

"God hath made all things for the sake of man, and man for His own sake."—AUGUSTINE.

PUTTING ON THE ARMOUR.

The Rev. Dr. Bogue is identified with the earliest movements of the London Missionary Society. Several of his appeals through the public press contributed more than any other single cause to the concentration of the energies of thousands of good men, which issued in the formation of that institution.

For several years prior to the commencement of its work, he had united to his pastoral duties the task of educating young men for the home ministry, and the early candidates for missionary labour were naturally added to the number of his students. His masterly understanding, early academic training, and ardent zeal, well qualified him for such a position. His own capacity for labour, indeed, was so vast, that he often over-taxed the powers of his pupils; but they seldom failed to acquire sound habits of thought, a thorough acquaint-

ance with the Bible, and intense thirst for usefulness.

"The whole morning," says Dr. Bennet, in describing the course of instruction, "was sometimes given to prayer and other devotional exercises, to prepare for a new session, or to implore the Divine blessing upon those who were going forth to take the charge of souls. On such occasions the awe of the Divine presence has been very powerfully felt, and the most devout and profitable intercourse has been maintained between the tutor and the students, as between them and their God."

Mr. Knill sometimes mentioned a circumstance which impressed him with the reality of those prayers, and the unreasonableness of expecting the Divine blessing while any known duty was neglected. A religious service in one of the neighbouring villages, which was not popular with the students because it occurred on a week evening and broke in upon their studies, was one day left unprovided for. Mr. Knill, whose turn it was to offer the prayer which preceded the academic lecture, was about to proceed, when the Doctor inter-

posed. "Stop, Mr. Knill, we cannot pray until a supply for Elson is obtained." "I will go, sir," said the person he had arrested. "Thank you, sir," he replied; "now we may venture to approach the throne."

It was the spirit which breathed in such incidents as this, which enabled Dr. Bogue's biographer to say, "No one could leave Gosport without a deep impression of the grandeur and responsibility of the ministry, and an awful anticipation of the day when every shepherd of souls must render up his account to the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep."

"I found," says Mr. Knill, in his general reminiscences of Gosport, "a large number of students, some for the ministry at home, but the greater part for the heathen. There was no college building. The students boarded with various families, and met Dr. Bogue for his lectures daily in the vestry of his chapel. Mr. Small's academy, which I had just left, was a place of seclusion and hard study, with great gates to keep us safely; but at Gosport there was anything but seclusion. As far as

missionaries were concerned, there was, indeed, hard work, and for those who, like myself, were to remain but for a short time, it was 'life in earnest.' I have often wondered how any of us survived. We had to write as much from the Doctor's various lecture-books, as would moderately fill up a man's time. In addition to this, we had to prepare for the various classes, and to preach almost every Sunday. The tutor's great soul was set on the conversion of sinners abroad; but he could not bear the thought that any should perish for lack of knowledge at home. Hence his zeal for breaking up every inch of fallow ground in Hampshire."

This laborious life, however, was varied by enlivening scenes.

"We have lately," he writes to Mrs. Isaac, on the 24th April, 1815, "parted with some of our missionary brethren; two for Surat, and one for Malacca. About twenty of the brethren accompanied them to the ship, which lay at the Mother-bank. You may conceive what were our feelings as we talked with them by the way. Sometimes we were overwhelmed

by the difficulties, and then we were animated with the pleasing prospect, the delightful hope, of bringing poor heathen to Jesus. At last the moment came for us to part. Some took a long farewell, not with the most distant hope of seeing each other again in the flesh, while others entertained the expectation of meeting again in the Eastern world. The voyagers were left apparently with a sacred calm upon their hearts; but we, in the returning bark, made the billows echo with

'Salvation, O the joyful sound!'"

To the same correspondent he mentions an occurrence, which illustrates the tact to which he owed so much of his usefulness.

"Last Sabbath-week I was supplying for Mr. Hunt of Chichester, who is republishing the works of the great Mr. Howe, of Torrington. On my way thither, my ears were insulted and my heart pained by the vain discourse of a gentleman who sat in the coach with me. After some time, I spoke very affectionately on the impropriety of his conduct, and he said he thought I was a 'Methodist parson.' I told

him I was, and, therefore, I had taken the opportunity of preaching to him. 'Sir,' said he, 'If I knew where you preached I would come and hear you,' and bound it with an oath. I told him where I hoped to preach the following day; and the first person I saw when I entered the chapel was my old fellow-traveller, sitting in the minister's pew. His conduct during the service was worthy of imitation. I I was asked by some after service if I knew that stranger; they thought he was a very pious man, by his marked attention to every part of the service. He went out, and I saw him no more."

Writing to his friend, Mr. Spencer, of Bideford, on the 4th of July, 1815, he says—"We have lately commenced street-preaching. I was not first on the field; but on the second Sabbath, at nine o'clock, the lot having fallen on me, I ascended the market-house steps, the first time, I presume, that ever they had been used for preaching the glorious gospel from. The market-house adjoins the beach. The congregation consisted chiefly of those who never attend a place of worship. I am sure

you would have rejoiced to have seen it. When we began to sing, the persons who were buying meat left the standings; the butchers, having no customers, left their business, and stood around us with their 'steels' in their hands. The porters and watermen drew near, and the sailors, with their immoral associates, left the brothels. The windows of the surrounding houses were opened, and from 150 to 200 were listening or looking. The sight of a crowd of such characters was enough to melt a rock of ice. I preached for about a quarter of an hour from the text—'I have a message from God unto thee.' Mr. Slater had concluded by a short prayer, when two sailors were seen pressing through the crowd. We knew not their intention, but we had no fear of *sailors*. One of them said to Mr. Slater—'Will you write a letter for me to my father? I fear I am breaking his heart.' The other came to me, and said—'You have been speaking a long time, sir, I am sure you must be thirsty; do take this three-shilling bit, and get something to drink.' 'Thank you, brave fellow,' I replied, 'we did not come here to

get drink.' 'No, no,' said he; 'I know what you came here for—it was to do us good; but you must have the three-shilling bit.' I said, 'Have you a Bible?' 'No,' was his reply. 'Have you one in your mess?' 'I never saw one,' said he. 'Well, then,' I added, 'come with us, and I will give you a Bible for your money.' He turned to his shipmate and said, 'Let us go with these gentlemen.' We took them to our lodgings, and gave the young man the Bible. He viewed it on all sides, and then opening his breast-pocket, pushed it in and exclaimed, 'There, sir, I will part with that book on the day I part with my head.'"

On the 2d June, 1815, he sends to a correspondent the following important piece of intelligence:—"My destination is now fixed. My future scene of labour is before me. India's burning shores lie open to my view; but God is there, and cheerfully I will go, if the Lord permit. Never did I see it a greater privilege to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor did I ever see more of the necessity and importance of an interest in His merits. Bought with His blood, called by

His grace, sanctified by His Spirit, and upheld by His power, oh, how precious!

"Hitherto the lines have fallen to me in pleasant places, and still goodness and mercy follow me. The station allotted me is peculiarly pleasing for several reasons. Mr. and Mrs. Loveless, who have been there some years, are very excellent persons. Mr. Bogue speaks of Mr. Loveless in the highest terms. When he was at the Academy, his amiable manner, the meekness of his disposition, and his eminent piety, gained him the esteem of all. I shall be under the protection of the British Government, and have many of my countrymen around me; and what is best of all, I shall not be prevented from preaching the gospel while learning the language of the natives, which must be the case in many places. The students say that mine is certainly the best station: may I be more grateful and labour more abundantly than they all!"

"In the month of September, 1815," it is said in the reminiscences, "when I had been just one year at Dr. Bogue's, he beckoned to me one day after lecture to remain. When the

students were gone, he said—'I have received a letter from London, which, I think, will interest you. Last year an Auxiliary Missionary Society was formed at Leeds, for the West Riding of Yorkshire. It will be one of our chief supports. The secretary has written to Mr. Burder, saying, "We have never seen a missionary at Leeds, and our large population needs something out of the common way to keep up and increase our missionary spirit. In October is our first annual meeting, and if you have a missionary about to leave, we wish him to be ordained at Leeds." 'Now, sir,' said the Doctor, 'you are one of the first who will leave, and I wish you to go. What do you say to it?' I felt disappointed, and replied—'My old pastor and his people wish me to be ordained at Bideford, and '——' and,' said the Doctor, 'you would naturally like to go; but you are public property now. You must live for the whole world. We must sacrifice personal feeling if we wish to be extensively useful. Remember there are 80,000 people at Leeds. Take two days to consider it.' On arriving at my lodgings, the students

wished to know why I had been detained. I told them, and asked their advice. They all said, 'Go to Leeds,' and I went."

The narrative is continued in a letter to Mr. Tucker, on the 2d of October :—

"On Friday evening I reached the destined spot, after travelling nearly 300 miles, without the least injury. Surely journeying mercies are not amongst our smallest blessings; for though there is no fiery, cloudy pillar to direct, yet a providential Hand is visible in protecting amidst so many accidents and dangers. On entering the town, I was beginning to fear what would become of me; but when the coach stopped, a man looked in at the window and said, 'Is there a gentleman here of the name of Knill?' I said, 'Yes.' 'Then you must go with me,' said he. 'Pray sir,' said I, 'who are you?' 'I am Joseph, at Mr. Clapham's.' Now, it happened that this good old faithful servant was nearly as well known in Leeds as St. Paul's Church in London. Joseph conducted me to the hospitable mansion of his master, where I spent a fortnight, which will never be forgotten by me nor by them.

On the Sabbath I preached three times, and on Monday gave the address to the united congregations, at their missionary prayer-meeting. On such occasions, the Independents and the Baptists meet together. Our meeting was in a Baptist chapel. Bigotry will soon be a name unknown in Leeds, I hope; for all parties seem united to promote the glorious cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was introduced to three evangelical clergymen, and I was informed that the pure gospel is preached in two or three of the churches. Thursday the branch missionary society meeting commenced. Mr. Leifchild, of London, preached one of the sermons on the occasion, and the *Evangelical Magazine* will inform you who preached the other. In the evening, the meeting for business was held at Salem Chapel, which is by far the largest. If you had been there, sir, I am certain your heart would have leaped for joy, you would have been ready to exclaim, 'Blessed are our eyes, for they see, and our ears, for they hear, those glorious things which kings and prophets waited for, and never found.' The large place was well filled, the speeches

were animating, and the collection good. The next day was appointed for my ordination. Ah, sir, this is important work; never did I feel more forcibly that remarkable saying of the apostle, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' I was almost overwhelmed: my departure, my work, my death and judgment, were presented to my view, and scarcely any one present did not deeply feel it. The Lord, I trust, was in the midst of us; all was solemn, a spirit of prayer was evidently poured out, and scarcely an eye was seen but in it stood a tear. This solemn day was closed with the commemoration of the dying love of Christ by Christians of all denominations, who were admitted by tickets. On the Sabbath day I preached three times again—once for the Baptists, and twice among the Independents; in the evening, to the teachers and scholars of the various Sunday-schools, including also an Arian school. This was an interesting sight. After the service, a deputation, consisting of five of the biggest of each sex, was sent me to return me thanks. When I spoke to them, the dear little creatures burst into tears, and I must have

been a stoic if I had not mingled my tears with theirs.

"On Monday, a missionary meeting was held at a village called Morley, three miles from Leeds. I walked 'among the tombs' of the pious dead. Some of the dear ministers of Christ sleep here who were ejected from their livings for conscience' sake. I witnessed the funeral of a young man just of my own age; and while I saw his parents weeping over their departed son, I could not help saying to myself, 'No parent may be near to weep when I am numbered with the dead.' Yet this did not divert me from the great work, but rather roused me to feel more tenderly for those poor souls who are dying without the knowledge of Christ, and made me long more earnestly to be among them to do all in my power while my life lasts. Before the meeting for business commenced, I preached a short sermon to a chapelful, and as many as could hear outside, for numbers stood at the doors and windows. The inhabitants of this village gave £40 last year to the society, and this year is expected greatly

to exceed the last. On Tuesday I preached again at Leeds, in a place where there is no regular pastor; it lies in a part of the town which is not very elegant, but several hundreds attended.

"On Wednesday last my public services ended. I preached my farewell from 'Who am I, O Lord God,' &c. I believe there was never such a scene witnessed in Leeds before; it is not in my power to describe it. After the service was over, the people would not depart till they had shaken me by the hand, and those who could not come to me by one door went round and came in by the other.

"On the Thursday evening, the ministers and people held a special prayer-meeting to commend me to God, and implore a blessing on my future labours. The Rev. Messrs. Eccles, Scott, Turner, and Payne, took part, and appeared to have their minds sweetly engaged. The place resembled a 'Bochim.' No one could have persuaded me that I should have met with so much kindness; though a total stranger a fortnight before, yet then I felt myself surrounded by mothers, and brothers,

and sisters. The services were concluded by singing that delightful hymn,—

Blest be the dear uniting Love!'

Now a solemn silence pervaded the whole assembly. Each kept his seat, when one of the ministers said to me, 'They will not depart till they have taken their last farewell of you.' I arose and went to the seat door, and immediately they hastened to it, when I parted with them to meet no more till we meet around the throne of God. Solemn thought!

"On Friday I took my departure, accompanied by several to the coach, almost worn out with fatigue and anxiety, bringing with me many proofs of kindness, and assured that I shall never be forgotten by them in the most important sense. The collections were £130; and in the town of Leeds no less than £500 have been collected during the past year for the Missionary Society. My soul was much refreshed with what I saw and heard, and my heart is cheered with the thought that many precious souls are praying for me at Leeds, in addition to those who bear me upon their

hearts before the Lord at Bideford. In the multitude of God's tender mercies, I am brought back to Gosport in peace, where I hope to enjoy my former privileges for a little season—how long, I know not. I anticipate the time when I shall once more behold my dear friends at Bideford, and pray that when we meet and when we part, it may be in the fear of God. Hoping that this may meet you in the full enjoyment of those blessings which make rich and add no sorrow, I remain," &c.

The intense interest attending these services did not arise exclusively from the comparative novelty of the missionary enterprise, and the prepossessing aspect and character of the youthful missionary; it appears, from permanent results, to have been in large measure the fruit of an outpouring of the Spirit of God. One of the ministers who took part in the services, writing twenty years afterwards, says that great effects were produced in different congregations, and that many persons were added to the churches, who continued to adorn their profession: while a general impulse was

given to the zeal of Christians. It may not be improper, in illustrating the strength of this feeling, to give a glimpse of the interior of an honoured Christian family, by the following note from Mrs. Parsons to Mr. Knill :—

"When I told you, that at the little prayer-meeting which I hold on the Sabbath evening from six to seven with my children, your name should be mentioned with that of my dear father, with my soul I made the vow, and it has been rigidly adhered to, and shall be while you or I live. Blessed be God, I can truly say I have had sweet communion in so doing, and often a blessed foretaste of the enjoyment of heaven. After prayer, my dear children often ask me about you, and tell me how they love to pray for you. Do so for them, and endeavour to meet us. Never, my dear sir, for a moment, suppose you will be forgotten here; many, I trust, will have cause to bless God that you were sent. Already we have heard of three who date from that time their serious impressions—one has proposed himself, and talks of following your example in becoming a missionary. Who knows but more may come

forward? When you are on the great deep, and far hence among the Gentiles, you will be present in the hearts of many here; allow me to say, by none more sincerely or affectionately than by those in this house. You will, I am sure, be pleased to know that all things here with us go on well. My dear husband is highly honoured in his increasing church. We have few church-meetings without several being united to us. Another of my sons is truly serious, and of the others I have great hopes. I do hope they will all become preachers of the everlasting gospel, to win souls to Christ. This is all my prayer for them."

One result of that visit was brought to the knowledge of Mr. Knill thirty-three years afterwards, in a singular manner. When attending a public meeting at Ludlow, in 1849, one of the speakers, the Rev. Samuel Tillotson, a superintendent preacher in one of the branches of Wesleyanism, introduced into his speech the following account of his conversion:—"A great feeling of delight had been produced in my native town by a missionary

being ordained there. I was a stout lad, and a bold blasphemer. One of my uncles was a godly man, a deacon of Mr. Eccles' church. He said to me, 'Samuel, there is a young man in town who is going abroad to preach to the black people, and he is to take leave this evening by preaching to the young; thou must go, lad.' The chapel was very much crowded; but being a strong fellow, I pushed my way, and got where I thought I should have a full view of him. We were all expectation. At last he made his way to the pulpit stairs. I watched him up into the pulpit. He was a tall, thin, pale young man. I thought, 'Is *he* going to the heathen? Then I shall never see him more; I will listen.' He read and prayed, and then gave out his text—'There is a lad here.' There God met with my soul; I yielded myself unto Him. Next Sunday morning, I went to a Sunday-school, and asked if they would have me for a teacher; They complied, and I soon began to pray in the school. Then I set up prayer in my father's family; next they made me an exhorter, and God blessed me to the conversion of my own father and

brother. I have now been a regular preacher in our body for thirty years, and God has smiled on my labours. I owe it all to that sermon. I have never seen the preacher since, and, perhaps, I may never see him ; but I shall have a glorious tale to tell him when we meet in heaven."

"Little did Samuel Tillotson think," said Mr. Knill, in afterwards referring to this incident, "that the once tall, pale, thin young man was sitting near while he was giving that narration. Time had greatly changed my appearance. He had never seen me but on that occasion ; and when I introduced myself to him in the midst of the meeting, the shock was electrical. How strange, that, so far away from the original scene, and after both of us had been wandering and labouring for so many years, we should so providentially meet! It has often struck me since, that ministers may expect strange greetings in heaven, from those whom they never saw on earth, but who have received good from their labours."

Mr. Knill returned from Leeds to Gosport, where he enjoyed, for four months longer, the

instructions of Dr. Bogue. Having received ordination, he found some new services demanded of him. "The first," he says, "was to baptize a little girl who was supposed to be near death. I at first refused, but afterwards applied to the tutor for advice. 'The dying child,' said the Doctor, 'will neither be better nor worse for it, but you may be a blessing to the distressed parents; go, sir, and may the Divine blessing accompany you.' On entering the house, we found the father walking up and down the room, wringing his hands, weeping, and saying, 'Oh, she will die; God is punishing me for my sins.' Then looking at us, he said, 'Are you come to baptize her?' 'Yes, sir, sit down; compose your mind, and let us talk together.' The mother was sitting with the child on her lap, intently looking on it, but she never said a word. I began to encourage him with the hope that God would hear our prayers and spare his child, and then gave him good advice how he was to train her for God. 'Especially,' said I, 'let her hear your voice in prayer.' 'Stop,' said he, 'stop, sir; you do not know who I am.' 'No, sir,' said I; 'but I

should be happy to learn.' 'We were both,' he answered, 'members of a church at Ryde. I led the singing, and conducted the prayer-meetings, and was a great professor. My wife would never have consented to have me, if she had not thought me a religious man. Our grocery business was not large, still we could live comfortably. But a fair prospect offered here ; we took this house and business, and this was our snare. When we first came, we always closed our shop on Saturday night, not to open it again till Monday. But our neighbours did much business on the Sunday ; and if a ship came into harbour, and wanted supplies, perhaps they got more on Sunday than on any day of the week. This was a great temptation to us to do the same ;—we tried it. First we opened the shop so as to have business over in time to go to chapel, next it encroached so that we could only go out in the evening, and then our consciences became so callous, that we left it off altogether ; and now, sir, God is going to take away our child to punish us.' 'Well,' I said, 'learn wisdom by this stroke ; repent, and do thy first works. Begin from this day ; call

in your young men, and have family prayer.' 'I cannot.' 'Cannot!' I exclaimed; 'why?' 'Oh,' said he, 'they know how I used to live.' 'Well, if you were not ashamed to serve the devil in their presence, don't be ashamed to tell them you have changed masters. Tell them honestly the whole story, and let them see your sincerity by the change of your deportment.' We then went to prayer, and I baptized *Sophronia*, and took leave. A few days after, I called at the shop to inquire for the master. The servant said, 'He is up stairs.' 'How is the child?' 'She is recovering,' said the servant; 'she began to get better after you left.' 'Call your master,' said I. The girl went to the nursery to call him; and while she was absent, I looked round and saw some Bibles and hymn-books on a table. On her return, I said, 'What are all these books placed here for?' 'Oh,' said she, 'they are books which master uses at family prayer.' So he had begun.

"In a visit which my family paid to the Isle of Wight in 1836, they went into a shop, and a young person serving in the shop said to my

son, 'Your father baptized me.' 'Indeed,' said he; 'when and where?' 'At Gosport, when he was a student. Please to tell your father that my father became an honourable member of the Church of Christ, and my mother died happy in the Lord. But before they died, they had the pleasure of seeing me also on the Lord's side. Your father's advice and prayers were not lost. Please to tell him this from *Sophronia.*'"

In the month of February, 1816, the time of embarkation for the East being now at hand, Mr. Knill went to Devonshire, to take farewell of his parents and early friends, bearing with him a letter from Dr. Bogue to Rev. S. Rooker, containing the following passages:—"I send this note by Mr. Knill, to express my best wishes for your prosperity and success, and to congratulate you on having sent forth such a young man into the ministry of the gospel. I never had a student with me who gave me more satisfaction. His talents are good, his piety eminent, his application to study assiduous, and his zeal for the advancement of the Redeemer's glory fervent and exemplary. He

carries away with him the esteem and affection of his tutor and fellow-students, and of the Christian people here.

"Last Thursday evening he repeated the chief part of his ordination service, greatly to the edification of the audience. I asked the questions; and concluded with an exhortation to the people, and prayer. I think, sir, if you were to have this service in your congregation, and also in the principal congregations in the West, it would be both acceptable and useful to the people."

This suggestion was readily acted on by Mr. Rooker; and a series of services took place, accompanied by a remarkable blessing. The ordination of a missionary was an event even more rare in those parts than in Yorkshire; while the circumstance that the individual had sprung from themselves, added greatly both to his own interest and to theirs. Bideford, Barnstaple, South Molton, Axminster, and Wellingborough opened their arms to him, and parted from him with tears and prayers. At one place, an aged disciple, who had for years been confined to bed, on hearing what was to

occur, seemed to regain his youthful vigour, and begged to be carried to the chapel; saying, that having prayed in secret for the heathen, he must, before he died, see one who was going to point them to the Lamb of God. His wish was complied with. He remained during the whole service, and soon afterwards departed to glory. At another place, his appeal reached the heart of a young man, with such power from on high, that sleep departed from him until he was brought to a resolution to surrender himself to Christ's service among the heathen. He has for many years been a blessing to the South Sea Islands. The name of Aaron Buzacott is well known to the readers of the Christian history of those islands.

"Services like these, amidst weeping friends and early associations, and hallowed by tokens of God's saving favour," Mr. Knill naturally remarks, "were very trying to my feelings. I used to think sometimes that I could weep no more—that the fountain of tears must be exhausted. But it was also very pleasant to be taken by the hand by the excellent of the earth, and to have a precious promise that they

would pray for me, and teach their children to pray for me. These were favours which I could not have anticipated, and may well lead me to sing—

'Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrain'd to be;
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee!'

Amidst these parting scenes, there was one more tender than the rest. I must not omit that. It was parting with my beloved and honoured parents, but especially with my sainted mother. She took off her wedding-ring in the presence of my father, and said, 'This is the dearest thing I possess. It was given to me by your dear father, as a pledge of his love, on our wedding-day. I have worn it more than forty years, and now in the expectation that I shall never see you again in this world, I give it to you. Your father gave it to me as a pledge of his love, and in his presence I give it as a token of our united love to you.' Description fails here. Tender parents alone can understand it. In addition to the ring, there was a silver cup which my grandfather

presented my mother, I believe on her wedding-day. This also she gave to me. The ring I keep as a sacred relic. The cup I gave to the skilful and attentive Dr. Lloyd, who attended me five months during the voyage from India to the Thames.

"When I had taken leave of my dearest friends, I repaired to London, to wait for the sailing of the ship. My residence in London was always with Mr. Nisbet, bookseller. He and his family were warm and affectionate friends of missionaries. Three or four of us have been at his house at once. He greatly assisted us in preparing for our embarkation, and I have always found a home at his house since. His friendships have not been overlooked by the Master. As it was with Obed-edom, so it has been with Mr. Nisbet. 'The Lord blessed the house of Obed-edom, because of the ark.'"

CHAPTER IV.

The First Campaign.

"God doth not need
Either man's works or His own gifts; who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best."

MILTON.

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN.

The *Earl of Moira*, commanded by Captain Kemp, sailed from Deal on 20th April, 1816, with a large and interesting force of missionaries for the East. It included Messrs. Hough and Winter, of the Church Missionary Society; Mr. Randall, of the Baptist Missionary Society; Messrs. Townley and Keith for Calcutta, Messrs. Meade and Reader for Travancore, Mr. Reeve for Bellary, and Mr. Knill for Madras, of the London Missionary Society. All these brethren, with one exception, were accompanied by their wives: Mr. Knill was unmarried, having met with a disappointment, which, considering his affectionate nature, he bore heroically.

"My dear, faithful, and affectionate pastor," ran a few lines to Mr. Rooker, at the moment of embarkation, "I cannot let Britain go till I have blessed God for you, and once more

thanked you for your affection and kindness. The Lord reward you and yours a thousandfold.

"My hand trembles, but my heart rejoices in the prospect of taking a long farewell of Britain, and her highly-favoured children. In case the depths of the sea should provide me a grave, or some fatal disease put a speedy termination to my life, accept this as my last tribute of grateful remembrance; but if the Great Head of the Church, in His infinite kindness, spare my life to reach Madras in peace, be assured that soon you shall hear from your affectionate and obedient—RICHARD KNILL."

The external circumstances of ship and weather conspired, with the delights of intelligent Christian fellowship, to make the voyage most auspicious.

"Our privileges," it is said in the reminiscences, "were greatly owing to the pious feeling of the captain. When he was an officer in an East Indiaman, a gay and thoughtless young man, he went ashore one Sunday at Calcutta, and seeing some E glish people enter a house which had the appearance of a

chapel, he followed them, and heard Dr. Carey preach. The sermon was blessed to the conversion of his soul, and the swearing youth returned to England a man of prayer. On his passage home he made a solemn vow, that if ever providence gave him the command of a ship, and a missionary were going to Dr. Carey, he would give him a free passage. We had the result of this daily before our eyes; on a former occasion he had taken out Dr. Yates, and now he was taking Mr. Randall and his family.

"When we had become accustomed to the motion of the ship, and had braced up our minds for action, this good man said, 'Now, let us turn this ship into a Bethel; let us have family prayer every day, and sermons on Sunday; it will sweeten the voyage, endear us to one another, and draw down the Divine blessing.'"

How this plan succeeded is told in a letter to Mrs. Isaac, dated the Cape of Good Hope, July 3, 1816:—"It is an unspeakable privilege to sail in such a ship. Though removed from friends and all that is dear at home, we

can hold fellowship with saints even on the bosom of the Atlantic. We muster no fewer than nine chaplains, besides the captain, who takes his part, and deservedly has our praise.

"Each chaplain acts for the day in alphabetical order. We have eight preachers; two sermons on the Lord's day, and one on Thursday—the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday, and the missionary prayer-meeting on the first Monday of the month. Think, my dear madam, how great the privilege! Surely the ship which, after a twelvemonth's voyage, rested on the mountains of Ararat, could not vie with ours.

"This is a part—let me now tell you of the harmony which exists among us, and then join with David, and say, 'How good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!' Our company consists of clergymen, Baptists, Independents, and one Methodist; but we live like brethren, 'each esteeming other better than himself.' The tools of controversy have been thrown overboard; we perceived they were grown rusty and out of date; we saw them 'sink as lead in the mighty

waters,' and they are now where, I trust, your sins are—viz., 'in the depths of the sea.' I have reason, indeed, to hope that much of the Divine presence has been experienced on board. That blessed Saviour who sanctified the mountains round about Jerusalem, and sometimes had a boat for His pulpit, has honoured this ship with His love. For my own part, I have never felt more of my own vileness and unworthiness in my life; for here is time for reflection—things which were once forgotten are remembered, and at times death and judgment appear just at hand. On the 1st June, when chaplain, and engaged in family prayer, I had such an overwhelming view of myself that I was forced to stop in the midst, and give way to a flood of tears, while Mr. Meade concluded the service; but I have not always been cast down.

"Shall I now tell you how we have been favoured as it respects the weather? We left Deal, under the most pleasant circumstances, on the 20th April. On the 23d we entered the Bay of Biscay, where the tremendous swell which generally pervades those seas affected

us but little. On the last day of the month we passed the isles of Madeira. The weather being cloudy we saw them not, but on the following morning an officer perceived them at daybreak about sixty knots astern—the weather being still so delightful that we thought we might have sailed in the long-boat without danger. At dawn, on the 3d, the captain discerned one of the Canary Islands, called Palma; we all hastened on deck, glad to behold it, and gratifying indeed was the sight, being the first land we had seen for many days. On the 27th we crossed the line, but felt nothing oppressive in the heat, though there was an almost perfect calm, which reminds one of the poet's words—

> 'More the treacherous calm I dread,
> Than tempests bursting o'er my head.'

"I am happy to inform you that, after a passage of sixty-eight days, and sailing eight thousand miles, we landed safely at Simon's Bay, which lies about twenty-one miles from Cape Town. It happened to be on that sacred day when the tribes go up to the house of the Lord.

There are but few houses at that place, but they are exceedingly white and clean. There is a little military force, a pretty little church, and a nice little parson. When our blessed Redeemer came to Jerusalem, He first visited the temple, and we imitated His example; the bell was ringing when we came on shore, and we walked immediately to the church. The lessons for the day particularly struck me; they were 1 Sam. ii, and Luke xv, and the text was, 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' We afterwards strolled into the burial-ground, sat among the tombs, and sang praises to God. We read inscriptions on the tombs of our countrymen who had gone thither to die, and sought to imbibe the solemn lesson."

"The next day," says another communication, "having been joined by our dear brother, Mr. Thorn, we travelled in ox-wagons to Cape Town. There I first saw a congregation of heathen, composed of persons from seven different tribes of Africa; and, having spent a most refreshing time, during which great kindness was shown to us by the Rev. George Thom and his congregation, we again weighed

anchor, and, after a favourable run, anchored in Madras Roads. Thus I found myself in my adopted country, surrounded by heathen gods, heathen temples, and heathen people."

The excellent man whom Mr. Knill joined was the first English missionary to Madras, and had at that period resided there for eight years. He had formed a church, of persons who had been converted through his ministry, and had been of great service in the establishment of schools, and in the distribution of Christian books throughout the presidency. His wise and benevolent measures had produced a considerable impression on the public mind; so that Mr. Knill always delighted to observe, "He laboured, and I entered into his labours."

"Mr. and Mrs. Loveless," he says, "were among the best people I ever saw. Their house was the 'Saints' Rest.' Godly men of all denominations found a home under their peaceful roof. They had a large and profitable boarding-school, which enabled them to use hospitality to strangers, and to entertain angels unawares. Mr. Loveless received no

salary from the Missionary Society, but was a large contributor to its funds by preventing expenses when missionaries arrived.

"We landed on a Tuesday, and the next evening I preached my first sermon, from these words, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;' and God blessed it to the conversion of a young widow, who afterwards became the wife of Dr. Medhurst, our oldest Chinese missionary.

"The next day Mr. Loveless said to me:—'It has long been the desire of my dear wife to have a free school for girls, as large as the free school for boys; and now you are come, we must set about it. I have my plan, and think we shall succeed.' In the next week I obtained a sum of money, in a most remarkable way, to commence it, as will appear from what follows. The wife of a minister in England had a brother, a captain in the Madras army. She wrote to her brother about me, and one day, when he had a party of officers at his house, the letter arrived. An English letter always produces a great sensation in India on tender spirits. The captain said to

his guests, 'Permit me to open my letter.' He read on, and as he read he laughed heartily. 'What is the matter?' said they. 'Oh,' said he, 'it is a letter from one of my sisters, who is introducing a gentleman to me, and wishes me to be very kind to him. Who do you think it is?—a missionary.' They joined in the laugh, and said, 'What will you do with him?' 'Why, I will make him drunk, and you shall come and see the fun.' A young officer who was present had a brother at Mr. Loveless' school, and on his way to the Fort, he called to see his brother. In conversing with Mr. Loveless, he said, 'I am glad you are going to have a coadjutor, sir. My captain has just received a letter from his sister about it.' And then, referring to the 'fun' they had enjoyed, he said, 'I advise you to put him on his guard when he arrives.'

"On the arrival of the ship, the captain saw my name in the *Gazette*, and on the Sunday morning after, he came, and brought several other officers with him, to the chapel. The sight was quite novel. At the close of the service, my friend inquired for me, and expressed great

pleasure at seeing me, asked many questions about Bideford and Axminster, and added, 'When will you come and dine with me?' I begged to be excused just then, as my baggage was still in the Custom House, and my presence was needed there. He shook hands, and said, 'I will call on you.' He did so, and as soon as he had retired, Mr. Loveless told me of the plot, but added, 'You must go. Be upon your guard. I am not without hope that God will bless your visit.' I dined with the captain and the party who knew about his sister's letter. Englishmen in India are noted for their hospitality. They live like princes. They fare sumptuously every day. The wine passed round merrily. They pressed me to drink. I politely declined. The captain said, 'When you are at Rome, you must do as Rome does.' I said, 'Captain, if you urge me to drink, I will write to your sister about it, and what will she say?' The snare was broken. 'Well,' said he, 'do as you please.' They related soldiers' stories, and I related missionary stories, and by way of application, I said, 'Gentlemen, we are going to build a girls'

school in Black Town, near our chapel, to correspond with the boys' school, and as this is the first visit I have paid, I should like to make it memorable by your becoming the first contributors. Give me something for a foundation stone.' They cheerfully responded, and sent me home in the captain's palanquin, with fifteen pounds towards the girls' school. From that time the captain became a regular attendant at chapel, and sometimes ten or twelve officers came with him; one of whom was converted by a sermon from Mr. Reeve. The captain also bought a large Bible and Hymn-book for himself, and sent copies of valuable books to various parts of India to his old friends. He never ceased to be my friend. After I had become very intimate with him, he said to me, 'If I had gone home before I saw you, and my sister had inquired about the missionaries at Madras, I should have said, "There are none," or, if she had asked me about your chapel, I should have said, "There is no such place."' So much for the testimony of worldly men on the subject of missions."

On the 4th February, 1817, he writes:

"My dear and tender Parents,—Fourteen thousand miles have not in the least abated my affection for you, my brother, or the dear children. No; I have you on my heart. In the beginning of January, I forwarded, by the *Albion*, five copious letters, but, to my great mortification, they are completely gone. The ship is wrecked; but every person saved. The cargo lost, and the packet of letters soaked and spoiled. This comes with only a few of the numerous particulars stated in the one that is gone, and to none of my dear friends can I write at present.

"Through the tender mercies of God, I am well, very well, much better than when I last saw your face. India agrees with me much better than I could have even hoped for. My dear brother and sister, Loveless, are most affectionate creatures. I live with them, and am quite at home. I live principally on rice, which suits my constitution. I take much exercise in the morning before the sun rises. The morning and the evening are the only seasons which are safe for Europeans to go out, because the heat of the sun is quick de-

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struction. I wear very thin clothes—white jacket and Nankeen trousers—sleep very cool—drink very little—preach very often—study very closely—make some advances in the language—visit the schools twice a week—see some fruit of my labours—and want nothing but a thankful heart. This is my language :

'Gracious Redeemer, make me bear
More of Thy Gracious image here.'

"This is a hasty glance at myself; now let me tell you of our chapel. Here we have service thrice a week, and many attend. On each side of the chapel we have a charity school : on the right side for boys—147 belong to it ; on the left side for girls, which is in its infancy, but bids fair for much good. Between the boys' school and the chapel, we have a school for the native children, little, sharp, intelligent creatures, almost naked. They sit on the ground, write on the sand till they can make good letters, and then on the leaf of a tree with a pen of iron. We have four other schools in various parts of Madras, in which are about 200 boys ; but the natives will not

permit their girls to learn reading—even a princess does not know a letter. Mr. Loveless has opened the large school-room for divine service; and every Sunday evening great numbers attend. We read the prayers of the Church of England in this place. I have no less than twenty-five officers of the army at once to hear me. In the fort, we preach twice a week to the soldiers; few attend. They do not think (generally speaking) that they are sinners. At the 'Mount' we preach once a week to a party of soldiers, in a house left for that purpose by a pious serjeant-major. This is eight miles from Madras; a lovely place; the road thickly set with beautiful banyan trees, which in some parts form an arch, and yield a delightful shade to the weary traveller."

Mr. Knill gained much influence over these officers. His sincere, open and direct manner suited their taste. He seemed to know instinctively when to assault the conscience, and when to touch a chord of home recollections. "What do you missionaries mean?" said one of them; "do you think that poor black fellow

will be damned?" "I hope not," was the answer; "but if he is, I think his punishment will be very light compared with yours, if you neglect God." The interrogator, convinced, lifted up his hands, and said, "I believe it; I have long thought so!" Another, whose conscience had been aroused, but who still clung to his sins, one morning called, and sought to get into an argument. "There are many things in the Bible, sir, impossible to be understood." "There are, sir," was the reply; "but the seventh commandment is very plain." The controversy ended. A young civilian, while engaged in writing a book on infidel principles, probably visited by some relentings, went one Sunday to the mission chapel. "The text," says Mr. Knill, was, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.' I saw the stranger in tears, and said to one of the deacons, 'Do you know where he lives? I must write to him.' I did so; and received an answer, requesting me to '*call at once*.' I found him in tears. 'You felt a good deal this morning, sir?' said I. 'Yes,' he replied; 'Christ has so often knocked at my door, and been refused admission,

that I feared to-day that He would knock no longer.' 'To prevent that,' I said, 'let us kneel down immediately and ask forgiveness; that is the plan.' We prayed; he wept; he resolved; he tore his infidel manuscript in pieces; left his infidel associates; abandoned his lucrative situation in the Company's service, and sailed for England. Before leaving India, he wrote a spirited letter to the public, calling a meeting for the formation of a missionary association. We had a good meeting, at which he spoke, making a public recantation of his former errors. A report of the proceedings was drawn up, and presented to the Governor, for permission to print it. His Excellency, with his own hand, erased 'all objectionable parts,' that is, all that was worth printing, and then gave us permission to proceed. We carried out the object, without employing the press at all."

"Mr. and Mrs. Loveless," continues the reminiscences, "would have me live with them, but they charged me very little for my board, whereby I was enabled, with my salary, to support seven native schools. These were so

situated that I could visit them all in one day; and while they gratified my heart, they aided me in attaining the colloquial language of the people. My horse and gig were seen constantly on these rounds ; and my horse at last knew where to stop as well as I did. This nearly cost a Bengal officer his life. Captain Page, a godly man, who was staying with us until a ship was ready to take him to the Cape, one morning requested me to lend him my horse and gig to take him to the city. The captain was driving officer-like, when the horse stopped suddenly, and nearly threw him out. He inquired, 'What place is this?' The answer was, 'It is the "Sailor's Hospital."' They started again, and soon the horse stopped suddenly, and the captain was nearly out as before. 'What is this?' 'A school, sir,' was the reply. At last he finished his business, and resolved to return another way. By doing this, he came near my schools, and again and again the horse stopped. When he got home, he said, 'I am glad that I have returned without broken bones, but never will I drive a religious horse again!'"

These labours, however, were not to be without interruption. Coming home exhausted one day during the rainy season, he flung himself on his bed, and fell asleep. He did not know that the bed had been exposed to the rain, until he experienced effects from which he did not recover for several years. The immediate result was, that he was compelled to leave Madras for a season; and by the kindness of the Rev. Charles Church, an excellent chaplain to the East India Company, spent about two months at Cuddalore. From that place, on June 10, 1818, he thus writes to the Rev. S. Rooker:

"The heat, and other things connected with this country, are not favourable to a speedy recovery from sickness; yet I trust the Lord has more work for me to do at Madras, and will, therefore, prepare me for it. I have much reason to adore Him for this affliction; it was sent in great mercy, and has been sweetened by a thousand consolations. Ah, my dear Rooker, missionaries want chastisement as well as others, and their Father loves them too well to spare them. We want to learn how to

suffer, as well as *do* the will of God, and I believe my soul has been as a weaned child. It is rather singular that, during my affliction, I have been staying with three pious chaplains; with Mr. Thompson I remained a few days, with Mr. Malkin also a few days, and with Mr. Church I have been more than six weeks, and shall not leave his habitation till the hot winds have ceased, which will not be for some weeks. He lives at Cuddalore, about 130 miles from Madras, in one of the pleasantest places in India. I mention this to show that Churchmen and Dissenters can love each other, provided they have a supreme love to Christ. The doctors whom I have consulted give it as their opinion that my liver is not attacked, nor are my lungs affected, but my debility has arisen chiefly from 'excessive labour and great abstemiousness.' This, I believe, is the case; but I did it, as I thought, for the best. And, my dear sir, there is no man who has a tender concern for the glory of God and the happiness of man, who can live in India without exerting every power; for sin is doing all it can do in its very worst forms; and who

would not endeavour to stop the torrent? I assure you, that at Madras I have every encouragement to work; the Lord smiled upon me, which put new life into all I did and said.

"About this time last year, two young men were first seemingly concerned about their souls under a sermon I was preaching from Rev. iii. 20. One of them was a young Englishman, a very clever, and now a very useful young man; he is about to return to Europe, and intends to spend the remainder of his days as a missionary. The other was the descendant of a Dutchman, who had scarcely even seen a house of worship before, or heard any thing of the blessed Redeemer. He had lived on the north coast, speaks the Gentoo fluently, and is now studying it with a view to proclaim the everlasting gospel in that language.

"Since I have been sick, I have received several letters full of encouragement, and calculated to excite the most grateful feelings in my heart to the ever-blessed God. Among the rest is a letter from a lady, who, twelve years ago, let her house to Mr. Loveless to preach in; and though she had the gospel preached

under her roof, she seldom heard it, and never felt it till one Lord's day she came to the chapel. I was preaching on 'family prayer,' and the Lord opened her heart, and now, for the first time, she began to pray. These things, you know, my dear sir, are such as stimulate to every holy action; they wind up all the springs, and put all the wheels in motion: every power is put to the stretch in devising and acting for the glorious cause.

"The last sermon I preached was from the last verse of James. One of the primary objects I had in view was to stir up the people to a serious concern about the Sunday-school. It had chiefly devolved upon me before my affliction. It was too much for Mr. Loveless, and hence it began to fall off. Thanks be to God, He blessed the sermon for its desired end; nine male teachers immediately volunteered their services, and some females, so that I believe we muster upwards of 100 Sunday-school children, and 13 teachers. This, for India, is wonderful. Perhaps I have already written you of my giving theological lectures to a dozen young men. This promised very

fair for great usefulness. One evening in the week was devoted to this. Mr. Bogue's plan was adopted, which to his students has proved a very efficient one, though, I believe, it is not adopted by any other academy. This, with all my other plans, has been laid aside by me for many months. Oh for strength, grace, and zeal, to enter on my delightful work again!"

The eminently Christian character of Mr. and Mrs. Church, whose acquaintance he had formed on their landing at Madras, united with the fine climate, and the beautiful scenery in which their residence was situated, revived the buoyant spirits of the invalid, but did not essentially restore his strength. "The doctor of the station was unremitting in his kindness to me. I had a visit from him daily; and after one of his calls, he said to my host, "I think Mr. Knill cannot recover; he has no stamina left. I wish you to advise him to go back to Madras, and the sooner the better.' Mr. Church sought an opportunity to speak to me. He first spoke very comfortingly about heaven, and the prospects of going there. Then he asked me about my hope. I had no doubts;

God favoured me usually with bright hopes. 'Then,' said he, 'it is right I should tell you the doctor's opinion.' He did so, prayed with me, and then left me. It was a solemn moment; I was glad to be alone. I felt as if I had received the message of death. I took a review of my coming to India. The field was promising, and the labourers were few. We had started many things, and prosperity had crowned them all; and 'it seemed mysterious, that just when I was able to speak to the heathen, all the purposes of my heart should be broken off. But I had left all for Christ and souls; and if God saw fit to take me to Himself, I wished to say, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done.'

"Very soon after this, it was reported that an open boat was going to Madras, 100 miles distant; and as this was an easy mode of travelling, the doctor advised me to go by it. I embarked in my palanquin, and was carried safely to dear Mr. Loveless's again."

About this period Mr. Loveless and Mr. Knill had an opportunity of showing kindness to one of the greatest of their fellow-labourers,

Dr. Judson of Burmah. He had left Rangoon in a small native vessel, of a class that never can safely lose sight of land, with a view of proceeding to Chittagong, ten or twelve days' sail distant. Tempestuous weather drove them to sea, and involved them in horrible sufferings. After two or three months' struggle with almost every species of privation, the little vessel came to an anchor in the mud of Masulipatam, about three hundred miles north of Madras. Mr. Judson gathered sufficient strength to pencil a note begging for a place to die in, and addressed it "To any English resident." When told, a little while afterwards, that a boat was approaching from the shore, he succeeded in crawling to the window of his cabin, and perceiving the red coat of the soldier, and the white jacket of the civilian, he sank down on his knees and wept. One of the officers treated him with the most generous hospitality, until he set out to Madras in search of a ship to Rangoon. He waited three months for a passage, while his friends in Burmah were held in painful suspense as to his fate. But it may easily be imagined how much his sorrow

was alleviated by the friendship of the missionaries. "I received," says he, in a letter to America, "such proofs of Christian affection from many dear friends, as rendered parting with them very painful, though my detention in Madras had, in other respects been almost insupportable."* Mr. Knill mentions but one incident of the visit:—"A young man," says he, "called on me one day, to speak about being baptized. Mr. Judson sat and listened to the conversation. The young man spoke admirably as to himself, the Scriptures, and the Saviour. At last Judson rose to his feet, and clasping his hands, exclaimed—'If ever I should live to hear one of the Burmese expressing himself as this man does, my heart would leap for joy.' Happily he did live to see his ardent wish fulfilled."

Another hot season in Madras was not reckoned safe for Mr. Knill, and he was persuaded to pay a visit to his former fellow-passenger, Mr. Meade, who laboured at Travancore. After an interesting journey through Tranquebar, Tanjore, Trichinopoly,

* Wayland's "Life of Judson," vol. i., p. 154.

and Palmacotta, where he became acquainted not only with new forms of idolatry, but with evidences of the Divine blessing on the labours of the early Danish missionaries, which at once affected and cheered his mind, he was cordially hailed by his friend, who, then in widowed solitude, persevered in proclaiming the glad tidings near the Serpent's Temple at Nagercoil. "I found him, with his dear little boy, in excellent health and spirits, but there seemed something wanting. When we parted at Madras, I carried the dear child in my arms to the ship, and Mr. Loveless supported poor Mrs. Meade who was then very ill; but now she has been twelve months an inhabitant of another world—a citizen of a nobler city. Poor, dear Meade looked forlorn; the sight of me revived his recollection of the wife of his youth; but the important duties of his station called, and he obeyed; and I had now a little time to reflect on my new position."

The salubrious climate had a reviving influence on Mr. Knill's enfeebled constitution, and he threw into the work all the energy at his

disposal. New schools were opened, sermons, consisting of short questions and answers, were delivered to willing auditories, and native teachers, bearing the names of English benefactors, were sent forth to the villages. With characteristic hope, the foundation of a very large chapel was laid; and when the difficulties which invariably gather round such undertakings appeared, they were met with unflinching courage. There were stones enough in the mountains, and trees beyond number in the forests; but the means of their transportation could not be found. While this problem was waiting for solution, "I saw," says Mr. Knill, "a huge elephant feeding near a temple with a keeper by his side. I said to the man, 'Whose elephant is this?' The reply was, 'He belongs to the goddess who lives in the temple.' 'What does the goddess do with an elephant?' 'She rides on him,' it was answered, 'twice a year at the processions.' I thought if we could get this elephant to draw the building materials for our chapel, the animal would serve a new master, and be employed in a better work

than carrying an idol. I mentioned it to Mr. Meade, and through the Resident the matter was laid before the Queen. Her Majesty said, 'They may have the elephant but they must feed the animal and pay the keeper.' We readily consented, and had the gratification of seeing the monster daily engaged in drawing stones and timber for the house of the Lord. The chapel was some years in building, but now some of the largest and most interesting anniversaries in India are held in it."

In the midst of these pleasant and important labours, a fearful visitation of cholera desolated that part of India. The affrighted population fled to the missionaries for relief, and gave them little repose night or day. They, having procured medicines, laboured to meet the demand, and were the means of rescuing many from death; But the sudden and excessive exertion told quickly on Mr. Knill's strength. "As I rode," says he, "from place to place, the distress was very alarming. At one place I saw a cluster of people on the roadside surrounding a man agonized by cholera. I gave him medicine and ordered the

people to rub him. At last the poor creature began to recover ; and opening his eyes, said, 'Who are my helpers?' In an hour he was able to walk to the next village ; but while engaged with him I was exposed to a very sharp wind. Choleric symptoms followed, which nearly kiled me. This was decisive. From this time there could be no reprieve. On partial recovery the doctor ordered me to quit India at once. Dear Mr. Meade, though reluctantly, helped me away ; and on the morning of the 15th February, 1819, I set sail for Colombo. Vessels generally cross the Gulf of Manaar in twenty-four hours ; but we were becalmed for five days, and the sun beat upon us very much. I sat, or lay, in my palanquin on the deck the greater part of the way, and suffered much from the liver, which was affected again by the intense heat. On our arrival at Ceylon, I was removed to the Wesleyan mission-house, where I was treated with all the affection and tenderness which the servants of Christ are wont to show each other."

After a short sojourn, Mr. Knill succeeded in securing a passage to England in the ship

Richmond, Captain Home. "The vessel had to go round to Madras to complete her cargo; and for the third time I entered Madras Roads, and once more, and for the last time, found myself with beloved brethren and sisters in India. It was early on Sunday morning. Two of the members of the church came off for me, and took me direct to the chapel. They were singing when we entered, and I heard the verse given out by Mr. Hands of Bellary—

'Grace will complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrow and from sins;
The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes.'

A poor creature, tossed about as I had been, and who was just about to leave the land of his adoption, for, perhaps, a watery grave, alone could imagine how these lines soothed my troubled breast. I silently added, 'Even so, Father, for it seemeth good in Thy sight.'

"On the morning on which the ship again set sail, a new mission-chapel was commenced, and, as a token of my brethren's love, I was honoured to lay the foundation-stone; after which, amid their tears and prayers, I bade

farewell to India forever. The chief officer, whose cabin was very airy, kindly gave it up to me, and I found it a great comfort. My health went through several changes in the tropics. One night the doctor considered me dying; and dear Mr. Griffiths, a Baptist missionary, who, with his wife and daughter, was returning in the same ship, sat with me and prayed with me, commending me to the care of Him who received the spirit of the dying Stephen. But I revived. Off the Cape of Good Hope we had stormy weather, which so increased the illness of two military officers—a captain and a major—that they both died; and their funerals exceeded in solemnity, I thought, any funeral I had seen on shore. The weather not permitting us to land at the Cape, we put into St. Helena, where we remained in lodgings for four days. The charges were thirty shillings a day, which, for me, amounted to six pounds, and for Mr. Griffiths and his family to fifteen pounds. But when we asked for the reckoning, the host answered that he had been ordered to present us with our bills discharged. On begging to know our bene-

factors, he answered, the Rev. Mr. Vernon, the chaplain, and Captain White. Many will have to thank God for sending English ministers to that rock—then the lonely prison of Napoleon. The chaplain accepted from me 'Cecil's Remains' as a keepsake, and again we set sail for Old England.

"On the 30th November, 1819, we landed at Margate, and after a day's rest, I set off for Mr. Nisbet's where I was cordially received."

"Oh, my dear Mr. Rooker," runs a note, dated a few days afterwards, "how can I begin a letter to you? My heart grows warm at the recollection of the blessings I have received through your ministry, and the favours I have received from your hands. May the Lord repay you a thousand-fold! You have heard of my affliction, and I doubt not that I have shared in your sympathy and your prayers. Now, let me entreat you to praise the Lord for His goodness to me in bringing me in safety to my native shores, and mercifully restoring me to such a measure of health and strength, as I never could have expected. The

improvement of my health since I landed at Margate (30th November), has been very rapid, and very great. Last Monday I saw the directors, and met with all that affectionate kindness which the blessed gospel inspires. Tuesday, good old Dr. Waugh took me to his physician, who reported well respecting me. The directors offered to send me to any place which appeared most suitable to my present state. The physician did not think that Devonshire was altogether suitable, as it was too damp; but I shall come down, by the help of God, for a few days, and stay among my dear friends for a little. . . . . Russia is contemplated as my future home. Probably the place of my residence may be St. Petersburg, but this is not yet decided."

JOURNAL.—"*January* 1, 1820.—On this first day of the new year, I set out for Bath. The weather was exceedingly cold, and travelling rather dangerous, but through mercy I suffered no injury, and about 8 P. M., was safe in the York Hotel in this beautiful city.

"*January* 2.—This day being the Sabbath of the Lord, I had the pleasure of hearing Mr.

Jay preach from the words, 'We thanked God and took courage.' I afterwards became acquainted with the Rev. Dr. Haweis, one of the fathers of the London Missionary Society. He was an old man, and full of days. More than fourscore years had rolled over his head, and yet there were moments when he was all vivacity. His heart was always warm on missionary subjects, and his eyes frequently flowing with tears, while I told him of the wonders of redeeming love among the heathen. The venerable saint talked of going to London in May, but he was removed in a few days to the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

"*January* 3.—The missionary prayer-meeting at Mr. Jay's. He pressed me to give the address, which I did to a large and interesting congregation.

"*January* 4.—Set off, after experiencing a thousand kindnesses from the Yockney family, for Bristol. As I entered this city, and was passing from the coach-office to Mr. Skinner's, my heart was so full that I was much relieved by giving vent to tears. When I last saw that city, I was a stranger to God, being far

from comfort and holiness. O my soul, if I had died then, what would have become of thee? I look back and tremble. I look up to Thee, O my God and Saviour, and adore Thee for Thy great goodness.

"*January* 6.—Having tarried with the truly excellent family of Mr. Skinner till to-day, I posted onward to Poundsford Park, the seat of Thomas Welman, Esq.,—the refuge of Christian ministers in the days of persecution, and the hospitable home of one or other of them ever since.

"*February* 9.—Took leave of the hospitable mansion. I received the most affectionate kindness, which, together with the peace and happiness I have enjoyed, has tended greatly to strengthen my body and establish my health. My dear and honoured friends, Mr. and Mrs. Welman, accompanied me to Taunton, where I took coach, and proceeded to Barnstaple.

"*February* 10.—Rev. W. H. Gardiner went with me to Braunton, the place of my nativity. My dear parents are greatly altered, having now exceeded the lease of human life—my

dear father being in his 74th, and my mother in her 75th year. On our arrival, my mother fainted, and I thought she had sunk to rise no more, but the Lord was merciful to her, and to me also, in that she gradually revived, and was wonderfully cheerful and happy ; her mind stayed upon God, her soul fixed upon the Rock of Ages.

"*February* 13.—Preached at Braunton to my old neighbours and companions with more than usual energy. Lord, bless Thy holy Word! During an absence of four years, I found many of the neighbours dead and gone, and their places filled by others, many of whom I know not. What a change does only four years make!—O my God, all things fade and die ; but Thou remainest. Help me to seek Thee for my present and eternal portion!"

For nearly three months, Mr. Knill tarried among the friends of his youth, in all the towns and villages of that part of Devon, requiting their kindness by touching and animating addresses, accompanied by a large blessing from on high.

CHAPTER V.

The Russian Capital.

"A MAN in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority though he be alone, for God is multitudinous above all populations of the earth."—BEECHER.

THE RUSSIAN CAPITAL.

At the period of Mr. Knill's return to England the religious condition of Russia was awakening deep interest in this country. The Scottish Missionary Society, as early as the second year of the present century, established a mission in the provinces bordering on the Caspian and Black Seas, which was attended with small fruit; but about ten years later a series of events kindled hope for the whole empire. The Rev. Dr. Paterson, who had been successful in promoting the publication of the Bible in Sweden, conceived the idea of attempting a similar work for Finland, which had then been recently annexed to Russia, and in the prosecution of his purpose, arrived in Moscow, a few days before that city was consumed in presence of the army of Napoleon. The anxiety produced by the war, which he feared would defeat his object, proved, on the

contrary, to be favourable to it. The strikingly providential destruction of the French legions, together with the exhaustion produced by their own protracted struggle, disposed several leading statesmen to solemn reflection. Above all, the religious impressions made, through a variety of agencies, on the Emperor Alexander, inclined him to look favourably on any measures which promised to promote the moral welfare of his people; so that when the proposal to print the Scriptures for the "foreign Confessions" of the empire was laid before him, he not only gave it an instant sanction, but expressed regret that "his own Russians" were not to be sharers of the boon. That omission, which had been made to avoid the hostility of the Greek clergy, was speedily supplied, and the Divine Word was eventually published in as many as twenty languages, inclusive of the vernacular tongue of the country.

The favour shown to this great undertaking, not only by the emperor, but by the heads of the Greek Church and the ministers of state, many of whom proved, on a subsequent day

of trial, to be men of decided Christian principle, was so great, that for some time whatever the sagacious and laborious Paterson asked for was promptly granted. The law permitted the people of each nation to worship according to the rites of its own Church, but allowed of no dissent, and of no proselytism. The English residents in St. Petersburg, who then numbered about two thousand, had, on that principle, enjoyed the ministrations of the Episcopal chaplain; but as these were not, at that period, of an expressly evangelical character, a strong desire arose in the hearts of a few persons for other services, and the request of Dr. Paterson for such a privilege was so far complied with that he was allowed to hold public worship on the evening of the Lord's day in the chapel of the Moravian Brethren. These ordinances, which were rendered peculiarly interesting by the sometimes lengthened visits of missionaries on their way to Astrachan and Siberia, received such evidences of Divine approval, that, after the lapse of four years, it was reckoned desirable to have a resident minister, who should make

them the chief object of his attention. This proposition had been just acceded to by the Directors of the London Missionary Society, when Mr. Knill returned from India, and no time was lost, after his own concurrence and that of his medical advisers had been obtained, in despatching him to St. Petersburg. After an extensive but exhilarating tour in England on behalf of foreign missions, he sailed from London in the autumn of 1820.

The season was rather too far advanced, and the voyage proved protracted and wearisome. The "multitude of his thoughts" during that interval found no record; but a letter to his parents shows how affectionately and devoutly he bore them on his heart:—

"At sea, lat. 58 N., long. 10 E.,
October 25, 1820.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED PARENTS,— . . . . Often have I been conversing with you, and lifting up my heart to God for you, when walking the deck or swinging in my cot. Oh, how earnestly I have longed for your spiritual and eternal felicity! This world has not been such a scene of trial to you as it has been to

many ; goodness and mercy have followed you all your journey through, and I trust that the arm of Jesus will support your tottering age, and His soft hand wipe away your tears. I wrote you from Gravesend, and requested my kind friend, Mr. Nisbet, who accompanied me to the ship, to say at the bottom of the page that he had seen me embark. Our passage to this point has been very expeditious, and we may expect soon to arrive at Elsinore, whence we shall be able to send letters. . . ."

A baffling wind kept the ship beating within a hundred miles of that port for a week ; but eventually he was able to address the Rev. George Burder from the "Bible Society's House," St. Petersburg, on the 7th December, 1820, and to say—"I hope you will never send another missionary so late in the year to this cold country. On our arrival at the island of Cronstadt, we found ourselves encircled with ice and snow not sufficiently frozen to suffer travellers to pass it. Hence I was detained there nine days, at great expense and in painful anxiety. However, on Saturday last the ice was so far broken as to

admit of our passing over to the opposite shore; and between nine and ten in the evening I arrived at this house. Every mark of Christian kindness and attention I received from our dear friends, Dr. Paterson, and Dr. and Mrs. Henderson. On Sabbath morning we met around the table of our Lord, and found it a time of refreshing from His presence. It was to me as life from the dead, after being shut out of Christian society for many weeks."

Mr. Knill thus entered a sphere in which he was destined to receive and to impart great blessings. It was a position requiring unusual circumspection, for the government was proverbially jealous, the Greek clergy were suspicious of every encroachment on the religious province, and not a few among the English were disposed to treat contemptuously those who discountenanced their general worldliness. But Mr. Knill, though of a highly sanguine temperament, was distinguished by a simplicity of purpose, and a fine perception of propriety in speech and conduct, which served, through the Divine blessing, to keep him beyond the

reach of his enemies. The congregation, too, which he found awaiting him, though small, included several persons of great intelligence and fervent piety, by whom his principles were strengthened, and every good enterprise which his fertile invention suggested was cordially sustained.

The entries in his private journal show a growing sense of responsibility. He writes on June 1, 1821 : " O my God, give me grace to love and serve Thee more and better ! Grant that every token of Thy favour to myself and to the people, may endear Thy name, Thy ways, Thy work, to my heart ! And wilt Thou, most gracious Spirit, pour out Thy holy influence on the people in such a plentiful manner that they may all become fellow-workers with me in warning and encouraging, in drawing and inviting sinners to Thee, and in building them up in their most holy faith ? Make us a holy and consecrated band ! Though despised by many, may we be rich in faith, full of good works, honoured by Thy love and presence ; and then all will be—all must be well."

Nor did these, and similar petitions, remain

unanswered. Persons who had forgotten the professions they had made in their native land, and yielded themselves up to the prevailing indifference of the city, were restored; and others, to whom the gospel in its simplicity and fulness was a new message, were graciously brought under its power, so that, in a few months, the band of communicants was doubled, and the general congregation augmented in an even greater ratio.

The gladness of this "time of refreshing" was chastened by the sudden death of Mr. W. Venning, whose brief career contributed so much to form the character of the little church, that a passing notice is due to his memory.

Mr. Venning, when resident in London, in 1815, was attracted by the Society for the Improvement of Prison Discipline, formed at that period under the presidency of the Duke of Gloucester; and having succeeded in reforming some juvenile offenders, at a time when that was judged hardly possible, he resolved to devote his remaining life to the enterprise. Proceeding to St. Petersburg with mercantile views, he found so much room for the exertions

of a philanthropist, that he totally surrendered his original pursuits, and gave himself over to the work of ameliorating the national prisons. No personal dangers, and no considerations of ease or wealth, restrained him. He plunged into the receptacles of disease and crime ; and by a skilful organization of noblemen of great influence, he was enabled, in a marvellously short time, to correct flagrant abuses. So deep and general was the impression produced by his disinterested consecration, that when he died of a fever, contracted in gaol, shortly after completing the thirty-ninth year of his age, Prince Galitzin, in proposing the monument to his memory, which now stands in the Smolenskoi Cemetery, said, " While Russia has to show near one frontier the ashes of his countryman who produced the first traces of amelioration in the condition of prisoners, and of the sick and suffering, let her show here the monument of a second Howard,—a worthy follower and emulator of the good deeds of the first."*

* Memoir of the Life and Character of Walter Venning, Esq., by Richa'd Knill. London, 1822. 8vo.

The dying words of this devoted man—"I wish to say to you, Knill, labour for Jesus Christ as long as you have breath in your body"—were long remembered, so perfectly had they been illustrated in the life which was then closing, and so fully did they accord with the purposes of the heart upon which they fell. Not less influential was the example of Mr. Venning on the subsequent life of his own brother, whose name will hereafter often occur in these pages; while an educational institution, which occupied much of Mr. Knill's attention, and which flourishes to this day, sprang almost immediately from his ashes.

"Mr. Walter Venning, the philanthropist," says Mr. Knill, "met with a hopeful penitent in the prison, and requested Mr. Gray, one of our members, who spoke four languages, to read the Scriptures to him and converse with him on religion. This work quite suited Mr. Gray's mind, and he expressed a strong desire to be constantly employed in it. He suggested to Mr. John Venning the idea of a school for poor foreigners; and he mentioning it to me, I drew up a paper, which the Princess

Metschersky showed to the Emperor. The Emperor, in his own prompt way, ordered the thing to be done, granting at the same time 5000 rubles for the establishment of the school, and appointing me as superintendent, with an annual salary of 2000 rubles, and Mr. Gray as master, with an annual salary of 1000 rubles. It came upon us as sudden and as genial as an April shower."

This institution, which offered elementary instruction through the medium of Russ, German, and English, to the children of persons not of the Greek Church, had to encounter at the beginning all the old prejudices against the education of the humbler classes. But on the 26th July, 1823, Mr. Knill was able to write to a friend :—

"Our boys' and girls' schools go on well. Dear Princess Metschersky is a nursing mother to them, and the young Princesses Sophia and Marie are following their honoured mother's steps. At present we have 270 boys and 70 girls—a most interesting sight. Upwards of 300 have been refused admission since the 1st of January, which has made our hearts ache;

but we had no room. We sometimes talk of taking a larger house, but we are afraid. It is a new thing; a charity-school for poor foreigners was never heard of, and we have much to struggle with. We did not, indeed, expect that an object so decidedly religious would meet with general support; but we had no idea that the contrary disposition would have been so prevalent. But there are happy exceptions; a gentleman from your side of the Tweed lately called at the school, and afterwards meeting me, gave me 200 rubles to its funds, saying, 'I will vindicate it wherever I go; it is the best thing ever set on foot in this country by the English.'"

The following entries carry on the view of his inner and domestic history:—

JOURNAL.—"*May* 29, 1822.—Reading this morning an account of Dr. Bateman's life and death, I was particularly edified and delighted. My soul melted at the goodness of God, and I longed to glorify Him in my *death*, if it should be His heavenly will.—O Lord, grant that when my heart and flesh fail, I may find Thee precious to my soul, and may be enabled to

declare to all around my dying-bed how precious, how glorious Thou art."

"*October* 30.—I would devoutly adore Thee, O my God, for Thy great goodness to us. Oh, favour us, favour us with more of 'the mind which was also in Christ Jesus,' that with meekness, love, zeal, and usefulness, we may pass through this world of sin to perfect joy in Thy presence.—My father's letter informs me of the joyful tidings that my nephew, about seventeen, comes and prays with my dear mother. Hallelujah!"

"*December* 2.—This day two years ago I arrived at St. Petersburg, and in tracing the finger of Providence, how striking does it appear!—Gracious Lord, Thy love in time past forbids me to think Thou wilt ever leave me. May every successive year of my life, if years are given, be increasingly instrumental in drawing sinners to the Redeemer. O Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee, and that to honour Thee is my supreme delight. This day do I give up myself to Thee, and would seal my covenant with my God, my Father, and my all. Amen."

"*December* 17.—The bridge was carried away by the ice, which prevented me from visiting my friends on the island. I therefore visited the school, and then accompanied my dear friend, Mr. Venning, to the prison, at which place, I think, I caught a cold. It increased rapidly, and by midnight I was in a violent fever. The thought of dear Walter Venning's prison-fever and death ran much in my mind, and during one part of the night I was a little delirious. It was a serious and anxious time. The communication being cut off from my dearest Sarah by reason of the floating ice, I knew not but that her next intelligence of me might be that I was dead and buried. Blessed be the Lord, He has not cut me off as in a moment, but has raised me up again. The kindness of dear Dr. Paterson was very great, as, indeed, it has always been ever since I knew him. I received from him some medicine, which wonderfully abated the fever; but I was unable to rise during the Wednesday, and he preached for me in the evening, to the great edification and comfort of the people. The inquiries and attentions of those of the little

church who knew of my affliction made me shed tears of joy. I adore Thee, O Lord, for placing me among so pious and affectionate a people. Multiply the number of such Christians by thousands and thousands. Then shall Thy name be glorified from the rising to the setting sun."

"*December* 20.—I was so far recovered as to be able to go to the Rev. Edward Law, to request him to publish the banns of marriage between me and my Sarah.—Gracious Father, who hast united our hearts to each other, pour down upon us much of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may be preserved from dishonouring Thee in thought, word, or deed, and be assisted in glorifying Thee in all our ways. Amen."

The event thus introduced to the reader's notice occurred at the chapel of the British Factory, on the 9th of January, 1823; and it may be permitted here to record a few words penned by Mr. Knill towards the close of his life, relative to the lady who, from that day, contributed so much to his personal happiness, and to his usefulness as a minister:—"She was the daughter of James and Isabella Notman, a

quaker family, originally resident in Newcastle-on-Tyne. Her father served under the two Emperors, Paul and Alexander, as the founder of tanneries in different parts of the empire. He won a fair fame for the Quakers long before the Emperor Alexander saw William Allen or Daniel Wheeler. Sarah was born in St. Petersburg, and after being educated in England at 'Friends' school,' accompanied her parents to Kazan, in Asiatic Russia, where her father, in the midst of his extensive labours, fell sick and died.* Looking back over our

* Mrs. Notman's life was once singularly preserved by an opportune visit of Howard the philanthropist. During the absence of her husband on a long journey, she was seized with a typhoid fever, and sunk under it to the point of losing all external signs of life. The servants were proceeding with preparations for the interment of the body, when Howard, who greatly respected the family, travelling near their house, came in, and was informed of the circumstance. He requested to see the body, and suspecting that life was not extinct, administered some powerful restoratives, which proved, by God's favour, successful. In a little while, "she arose and ministered unto them," having, during her utter helplessness, heard distinctly the conversation of the servants respecting her funeral, and the commands of Howard respecting the measures for her restoration. When she afterwards accompanied her daughter to a "Friends' school" in England, the first object of interest to which she conducted her was the statue of her deliverer in St. Paul's Cathedral.

happy union of more than thirty years, I deliberately consider it, next to my soul's salvation, the greatest blessing of my life."

About this time Mr. Knill's labours were much increased by his having accepted the appointment of the London and the Scottish Missionary Societies as a medium of communication between them and their missionaries in the remote parts of Russia. This work gratified his early and unquenched interest in the heathen, and he threw himself into it with his whole heart, maintaining an extensive and enlivening correspondence with those brave men, who, under the impression which proved too correct, that even the hard lot which they had chosen among barbarous and warlike tribes would soon be denied to them by the Greek Church, devoted themselves with intense application, to translations which might survive their personal labours. Upon men pursuing such toil, in such regions, uncheered by Christian society, or even by successful evangelism through the living voice, the letters of one more pleasantly situated came down "like showers that water the earth."

Not less welcome did his personal visits continue to be to numbers of his own countrymen in the capital, who had long been estranged from the privileges of their native land. He reckoned, and perhaps justly, that such direct communications, in his position, formed the most important department of his duties. It certainly was one to which he was singularly adapted, and in which he was permitted to observe very distinct proofs of the Divine blessing. The spirit in which the work was pursued is thus expressed :—

JOURNAL.—"*February* 19, 1823.—In my pastoral visits during this week my soul has been much comforted by the pious conversation of my dear people. They are very dear to me indeed. Many of them are my children in the faith.—O my God, how greatly dost thou comfort me and bless me, in giving me such tokens of Thine approval! Dearest Lord and Saviour, thou knowest that I love Thee and Thy service; nor would thousands of gold and silver so rejoice my heart as to see Thy kingdom advancing among us."

Particular cases are often recorded, and

made the occasion of special prayer or praise —the golden thread which ran through the whole texture of his life—"Mr. M. was deeply affected when conversing with me on spiritual things. His little daughter observed her father affected, and with much concern looked at him and then at me, as if I knew the cause. May she soon hear a father's prayers, and know that his tears are those both of sorrow and of joy." Again: "Spent the day at the V.'s in the country. Had much delightful conversation with Mrs. V., and could not but admire the goodness of God in making her so devoted." Then, at a dying-bed: "Oh, how my soul was comforted to behold the apparent penitence, solicitude, love, hope, and obedience of this poor dying woman!—I thank Thee for bringing me acquainted with that poor, depraved family." Of a public person of great influence: "The censor purchased good books for his domestics. Was much delighted with his moistened and intelligent eye, and his apparently warm and devoted heart.—Lord, let there be ten thousand such instances of piety in this city! Amen."

Towards the close of this year the Russian Bible Society, which for the ten previous years had continued to pour forth its treasures in an uninterrupted stream upon the country, began to experience some premonitory difficulties. The metropolitan, Michael, who had been its true friend, died, and was succeeded in his ecclesiastical office by Seraphim, its decided enemy. The complaints of the inferior clergy could now find their way to influential persons in the Church, and from thence to the ears of Arakcheyeff, the chief minister of state, upon whom the burden of government began more and more to be developed. The emperor, however, continued to show his personal favour to the promoters of evangelical measures, and while he did so, no open hostility was to be dreaded. Mr. Knill thus cautiously and devoutly alludes to the imperial kindness in a letter to his young friend, Mr. Parkinson, then in England :—

"*August* 15, 1823.—The great friend of good men and good things in this empire lately took tea with Mr. and Mrs. Venning. He was there for an hour and a half, and never was so warm

in the things of God. Let us pray daily for him ; for in his days the righteous flourish."

At a somewhat later period, he writes to Miss Ross of Edinburgh, to whom he was often indebted for a deep and practical interest in his endeavours :—" I enjoy the fullest liberty, and the Lord is pleased to bless us with many proofs of His loving-kindness, and though I know not what may be my lot to-morrow, yet He has taken from me all fear and disquietude. I was greatly agitated and distressed at one time, but I cried unto the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. Hallelujah ! . . . . Decided and almost universal hostility to vital religion is a marked feature of the present time, and it is to my mind an evidence that it is greatly on the increase, that it is striking its roots deeply in the hearts of the Lord's people, and that the energies of the Church will be called forth mightily. It is a very eventful period, and I trust that we shall be assisted to advance the Redeemer's kingdom."

The same letter mentions the continued stability of the school :—" The announcement

of your great kindness to our school, through Dr. Brown's letter, was quite cheering to the hearts of the committee. It came most opportunely; for, owing to the want of religion among all ranks, we meet with very little assistance. Indeed, many strenuously oppose it, especially as it is in the hands of those whom they are pleased to style 'Methodists.' Notwithstanding this, it flourishes, and more than two hundred boys and one hundred girls are daily receiving instruction in the most important things. These children are from among the lower orders, and, through the Divine blessing, may be expected to exert a great influence over the morals of the present generation, and the next generation also. If you have never been out of England, it is not possible that you can form an idea of the depraved state of a large city with little religion in it. Books cannot convey a thousandth part of the real state of things."

Still, too, did he enjoy the coöperation of the valued friends who laid the foundations of his work, and in whose usefulness he was ever as ready to rejoice as in his own. On one oc-

casion, being seized with sudden illness when about to preach, he called, he says, "on Dr. Paterson to pray, and with difficulty sat down. The Doctor immediately came into the pulpit, and went through the service in a most solemn, animated, and edifying manner, afterwards administering the Lord's Supper to the largest number of communicants that we have ever had. The Lord was very gracious to us all in thus assisting His servant to declare His counsel." At another time, when detained at home by sickness, Dr. Henderson and Dr. Paterson divided the services between them, and "I bless the Lord," is his language, "that my dear people were so well supplied, and that my brethren were enabled to set forth the word of life in so precious a manner. Oh that I may hear, on some future day, of sinners being converted under these faithful discourses!" Nor were his sympathies limited to his own flock. He watched with deep interest signs of advancing life in the other English congregation. "It is very gratifying," is the entry in the Journal of March 14, 1824, "to hear of the Rev. Edward Law's faithful preaching

to so large a congregation.—May Thy word be made like a fire and a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces! May there be a shaking among the dry bones, and a great ingathering of precious souls to Christ! Amen."

CHAPTER VI.

Storms.

"Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong!"

LONGFELLOW.

STORMS.

THE series of trials, both public and domestic, which now approached, was ushered in by the inundation and threatened destruction of the city. Peter the Great, it is well known, chose the site of his capital more with reference to his political and commercial designs than from regard to the comfort of its future inhabitants. A position fifty miles below the largest lake in Europe, at the head of a magnificent gulf, and commanding communications with the Eastern and Western hemispheres, was not to be rejected because it was so soft that the foundations of palaces required to be as deep as the walls were high, and so low as to be in no part twenty feet higher than the surrounding waters. The imperial determination so far prevailed, that one of the most imposing cities of the world now rests on the quivering surface of those marshy islets; but a higher law

is said perpetually to hold over it the possibility of a complete submergence. Whenever it shall happen that a powerful west wind shall blow during the fortnight which witnesses the breaking up of the ice, the waters of the Gulf of Finland, it is affirmed, will meet the current from Lake Ladoga, and, rising together, they will roll over the city, and involve its four hundred thousand inhabitants in a fate not less terrible than that of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Such a combination of circumstances may, of course, never occur; but even the modified form of it, which must now be noticed, brought consequences sufficiently dreadful. In the middle of November, 1824, a gale of unusual violence swept through the British Channel, the North Sea, and the Baltic, and, passing up the Gulf of Finland, reached St. Petersburg on the 19th of that month. Trees which had stood every winter-blast, from the foundation of the city, were levelled with the ground, and the iron roof of the Bible House was "rolled up like a sheet of paper, and carried into the air." This peril of the wind brought the greater peril of the waters.

"On Thursday night," writes Mr. Knill to Mr. Alers Hankey, on the 23d November, "the wind was high, and the waters rose very much, so that guns were fired to warn the inhabitants of those apartments which were nearly on a level with the river. The next morning the guns fired again, as the waters had greatly increased. About ten A. M. some of the streets near the Neva were beginning to be covered; but the people would not believe that the waters could rise much higher, forty-seven years having rolled away since the city was inundated. By half-past ten it was too late to attempt the removal of any property, and all the people were thrown into confusion. Those who could run, ran; and those who could not, cried for deliverance from immediate death. In some instances assistance reached the sufferers; but in many more they were suffocated in the flood.

"By two P. M. the city presented a scene the most awful that can be conceived. Every place was deserted. There was nothing visible that had life, and the streets were occupied by ships, and boats, and watch-houses, and float-

ing trees, and even coffins from the cemeteries, with property of various kinds. Several entire villages were carried away, with the exception of a cottage here and there to make known where they once stood.

"The havoc which has been made among the poor surpasses anything that I have ever heard of in modern times. Many thousands were hurried in a moment to meet their Judge. This is the most affecting part of the story; for the loss to the commercial world, though great, and the miseries among the trades-people, though pressing, may all be remedied; but those who are gone!!! those who are gone!!! May I never lose the impression which I now feel of the value of the soul and the necessity of redemption through Jesus Christ, as well as the importance of making every sermon to abound with those particular truths which are calculated to lead men to Christ, and to be ready to depart! Oh, what would I have given for an angel's voice, and an eagle's wings, to flee and tell the drowning peasants of the Lamb of God! but now it is over."

About noon, the wind, though it did not

abate in force, by God's merciful appointment, shifted a few points, and the city was saved from complete destruction. By two o'clock the waters had decreased several inches, and by six it was possible to walk in the streets. Next morning, those who had been driven from their dwellings, and were still alive, returned to witness the desolation, to seek for traces of lost friends, and to save the remnants of their property.

"I am happy to know," Mr. Knill continues, "that many of my dear people were much engaged in prayer during the dreadful hours, and some of them were made inexpressibly happy in the prospect of death and eternity. It is very delightful to see that a great spirit of love and sympathy is manifested towards the sufferers. Almost every family that has comfortable lodgings has taken another family, or part of a family, to share its comforts, or in some other way to alleviate its sorrows. Dear Mr. Mortimer, the Moravian minister, has suffered a good deal. He and his family are for the present residing with me. The Moravians have often succoured others, and I felt very

thankful, and considered it a great privilege, to afford him a little temporary accommodation. There is reason to fear that, as the winter is begun, the wet rooms will remain cold and damp, and produce much sickness. A subscription is begun, which I have no doubt will be very liberally supported."

The misery, indeed, which followed the flood was much greater than that which had been experienced during its prevalence. Thousands had been driven from their homes without food or clothing, and instant exertions were necessary to prevent wide-spread starvation. The Russians, who are a compassionate people, threw themselves with energy into the work of mercy; and it was a tribute as honourable to them as to the foreigner whom they trusted, that some of the most influential nobles and gentlemen placed themselves under the leadership of Mr. John Venning. When the news of his measures reached the Imperial family, they, also, sent him liberal pecuniary support; the Grand Duke Michael putting into his hands £1000 sterling. Arakcheyeff, the foe of evangelism, demanded that those funds

should be placed at the disposal of government; but Venning boldly declined obedience, and, after relieving the wants of the sufferers with unimpeachable integrity and discretion, he proposed that the balance of the fund should be augmented, and applied to the establishment of a permanent House of Refuge, which, to this day, opens its gates to the afflicted and the destitute.

The gloom of the closing year was not relieved by the events of the spring: the first cloud which darkened the pastor's house drew near.

JOURNAL.—"*March* 10, 1825.—Returned, and found my dear wife and child in perfect health. My lovely Julia met me at the door, and congratulated me. I sat down at my writing-desk to prepare letters for England. At half-past two the babe became very uneasy, and would not be quieted. Her dear mother attempted various ways to quiet her, but all was unavailing."

The account is continued in a note to Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson, dated March 17, 1825:

"The delight which you appeared to take in

our beloved Julia causes me to take up my pen, and with a trembling hand, to inform you that last Wednesday, between four and five in the afternoon, she left the abodes of mortals to join the spirits of the just. . . . When I saw that death was rapidly approaching, I sat at her feet, and my dear Sarah at her side, while Mrs. Venning was kneeling near her head. There we called upon God to support us, and help us to bear the shock. Gracious and merciful has He been in this trying hour; blessed for ever be His name. She expired a few hours before the first anniversary of her birth. We had been fondly anticipating the pleasure of the society of a few of our friends to commemorate the interesting event; and little did we expect, instead, to have her laid in her coffin, and nearly all our acquaintances coming to sympathize with us."

JOURNAL.—"*March* 12.—The dear babe is laid out in my study. Oh that the circumstance may be attended with the most salutary effects on my mind, on my studies, on my prayers, on my sermons! Thus may the death of my darling be overruled for great good

to the parents and children of my little flock!

"*March* 14.—Rose this morning at five, and repaired to my dearest Julia. After I had kissed her sweet forehead, and her clay-cold purple lips, I took her dear hand in mine; and my soul at this moment received unspeakable comfort. For, I thought, this hand will never be lifted up against God—this heart will never indulge a thought contrary to His holy will—this silent tongue will never utter a word of rebellion—nor shall the little feet ever be found in the broad road that leads to death! I cannot describe how happy I felt at the thought of this, while the tears rolled down my cheek with all the tender emotion of a fond father. I thanked God, and took courage, and hastening to my wife, related to her how the Lord had comforted me. She also was greatly consoled; and we prayed together for the Lord to help us through the day. Ah! it was a day never to be forgotten; and to make our grief complete, neither of our dear brothers, Paterson and Henderson, being confined to their chambers, could come to help us,

and pray with us, or bury the babe. Thanks be to God, I was enabled to do this also. A few friends came, and I read the 90th Psalm, prayed for a blessing to follow from it, and then took the body to the grave in the Smolenskoi burying-ground. It was truly astonishing to see how the Lord supported both myself and the dear mother on the way, and at the grave. We committed the dear little body to the dust, in full assurance that it shall rise again all triumphant and all glorious. (1 Cor. xv. 42.) Tears have since been our meat day and night, but they are sometimes tears of tenderness—sometimes of sorrow—sometimes of gratitude. Oh, what a precious gospel is our gospel! What life and immortality are brought to light by it! Without it we should not know what would become of little children, or what will become of ourselves. But, blessed be God, we have a sure word of prophecy, to which we do well to take heed!

"*March* 15.—Lord's day morning. Preached my dearest Julia's funeral sermon from 'Be ye ready also.' It was a very solemn morning. What a mercy it will be if some one be enabled

to say in truth: 'From the death of Julia Knill I date my spiritual life!' *August* 10.—My prayer has been answered; dear M. H. has told me this day that this sermon was blessed to her soul, and brought her to give up herself to the Lord. Thus, my God and Father has given us another daughter. *September* 23, 1827.—Mr. D. told me he also was impressed by this sermon.—How good are all His ways!"

To the young friend to whom he communicated this first domestic sorrow, and who was maintaining a Christian profession in an ungenial atmosphere, he wrote, at this time, in the following strain: "We were much delighted to hear of the decided conduct of Mr. ——. No doubt it will become known here; and I hope that grace will be given him to act with the same decision at St. Petersburg, that he may become a truly good man, and a great blessing. He has a talent for communication; and if his heart be warm in the things of God, he will speak to the advantage of some, and the confutation of others. Your being in Moscow has no doubt been a blessing to him, and

we ought to hope and expect that it will prove a blessing to many. Great wisdom and purity should be sought after by you from the source of all, and God will give it you if you seek Him. I see and feel how much I need this, and so will you. The more public our profession of religion becomes, the more need there is of an increase of grace, that it may correspond with that profession. A star may set, and few observe it, but if the sun be eclipsed, it is seen and conversed about by all the people in the nation; so a Christian, in some obscure corner, may pass on calmly with low attainments in religion; but if he fills a conspicuous station, many eyes are upon him, and many ears are waiting to hear something evil of him. You were known before now, but since your return both you and Mr. —— will be considered more decided than ever. I pray God that He may give you a large share of every heavenly grace, and make your house the gate of heaven to many!"

The shadows of the year deepened as it approached its close. The Emperor, although maintaining, as it has been intimated, the most

friendly relations to the men who sought the religious good of the people, had permitted the influence of the priesthood to obstruct their plans. The removal of Prince Galitzin from the presidency of the Bible Society, and the substitution of the new metropolitan, Seraphim, was a marked, and, as it proved, a fatal concession to their malice. The meetings of its committee became infrequent; and the doctrine was at length announced from the chair, that the undirected reading of the Bible was fraught with danger, both moral and political. These omens were rendered more alarming by the increasing disinclination of Alexander to public business. His nervous system appeared to be shattered, and his mind depressed. He spent much time in retirement, and devoted himself to religious duties with an ardour which some pronounced superstitious. In the early part of the autumn, the Empress, who was in delicate health, was advised to reside during the winter in the south of Russia, and the Emperor willingly seized the opportunity of withdrawing from the publicity of the capital by joining her at Taganrog.

While there, his depression was fearfully increased by the intelligence of a latent conspiracy in the army. The energy requisite to grapple with this difficulty no longer remained to him ; and not perceiving that the disaffection was directed rather against the unprincipled men whom his declining force had suffered to rise into power than against himself, he exclaimed, as if heart-stricken, "They have not known me." A cold caught during a rapid tour in the Crimea, acting on his enfeebled condition, produced typhus fever, under which he sank on the 19th of November. The event produced unfeigned grief in St. Petersburg, for the monarch was sincerely beloved by his people, and by none so much as by those who had the best opportunities of studying his private character. Mr. Knill's note, on the morning when the fact became known, expressed the real feeling of thousands :—

JOURNAL.—"*November* 27, 1825, *Friday*.—This morning I was informed that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Alexander was very ill, and that the family had been praying for him. It was painful intelligence, but left hope

that we should soon hear of his restoration. I went to the school, then called on a friend who was very much distressed at hearing the report, and before I reached home I learned that it was certain the beloved monarch was no more. I saw the soldiers marching from the palace, whither they had been to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor Constantine. The whole city seemed to be impressed with the awful and solemn scene. Every person I met seemed to feel that a friend was gone. Oh, what a day was this! How unexpected—how sudden was the removal of this much-revered and greatly-beloved Emperor! Lord, sanctify this awful stroke. Support the bereaved widow, and fill her soul with peace and consolation, and may the honoured and distressed mother find in Thee a comforter. Lord, have mercy on me and my dear little congregation. Incline the heart of the Emperor Constantine towards us, and let none be permitted to disturb or distress us. May we be assisted to walk in the most exemplary manner, so as to fear God, honour the king, love the brotherhood, and do good unto all men. Amen."

It is well known that Constantine did not ascend the throne; but it is not necessary to the elucidation of this memoir to do more than glance at the fact. It was at his own urgent entreaty that Alexander, three years before his death, executed a document releasing him from the responsibilities of that position, and passing them downwards to Nicholas, his younger brother. This paper was deposited in three separate places, and its contents were not divulged to more than two or three persons, of whom one was Alexander's most trusted friend, Galitzin. Nicholas, either unacquainted with it, or desiring to establish his claim on a firmer basis, went instantly, on hearing of the Emperor's death, to take the oath to Constantine. Galitzin met him on the way to the altar, and mentioned the fact; but he would not listen. He swore allegiance to his brother, and was followed in the deed by the ministers and the army. The consequences of this precipitancy were instantly foreseen, and occasioned deep anxiety. When Constantine, then in Poland, transmitted his absolute refusal to act, and the army was required immediately to transfer

their fealty to another sovereign, the leaders of the conspiracy saw that their hour was come. They issued orders to the troops to keep the oath which they had already taken, and thus adroitly seized the sentiment of loyalty to do the work of sedition. When, on the morning appointed for taking the second oath, the soldiery poured into the city, Nicholas rode up to them, and saluted them with cordial frankness; but they refused to return the compliment, and doggedly marched past with the muzzle of their guns depressed. Dr. Paterson witnessed this from the window of Count Lieven's mansion. "It was," says he, "an awfully critical moment. I could not help pitying the Emperor, who appeared pale and dejected, but behaved well through the trying scene. The horse were ordered to charge, but the mutineers at once formed into squares, and held them at defiance; and on retreating to their former position fired some shots after them, by which several were wounded, and some killed, among whom were some of the chief officers."*

* "The Book for Every Land: the Autobiography of

Night drew on before extreme measures were permitted, but the artillery were then commanded to open fire, and the irsurgent ranks were broken. "I had left the city," says Mr. Knill, "in the morning with my family, when all was quiet. But as we returned at night, we saw large heaps of something piled up on the great square. Many soldiers were standing about, and the usual thoroughfares were shut up. On inquiry, we found that the heaps, among which we had been passing. were dead bodies—that the soldiers had revolted—that the governor, Miloràdovitch, had been slain—that a dreadful day had passed in the city, and that still greater troubles were expected. We felt that our situation was very awful, but God took care of us. In the night, the Place was cleared of the dead, the bodies having been put through large holes in the ice into the deep and peaceful river."

For the first few months of his reign, the Emperor was too much engrossed with measures for the extinction of the conspiracy, and

John Paterson, D.D. Edited by W. L. Alexander, D.D. London, 1857."

the rectification of the general disorder to which puplic affairs had been reduced by the misrule of Arakcheyeff, to give any indication of his policy relative to religious institutions. But when the official representatives of all public bodies were invited to the funeral of the deceased Emperor, those of the society which he regarded as the chief gem of his dominions were omitted—a circumstance which was regarded as significant of a design to permit it quietly to subside into oblivion. It was not till 13th February, 1826, that the obsequies were observed; and when Mr. Knill, under that date, writes in his Journal—"On returning from the grand and solemn procession, conveying a very affecting view of human greatness, a few of us met at the Bible House, and united in prayer to God for grace to live more and more to His glory,"—he reveals the thoughtful and expectant posture of the little band.

It may be true, that imprudent oratory in England alarmed some faithful adherents of the Greek Church, and even that, in some places, conspirators had met under the guise of

a Bible Society Committee; but the tide had risen and rushed on, independently of such accidental auxiliaries. More than half a million of copies of the New Testament, in the mother tongue of the people, could not have found their way to all parts of the empire without producing effects unpleasant to the Church authorities; and no human instrument, but the will of the reigning prince, could have held the opposition in check. The new Emperor had not, like his predecessor, fathomed the deep springs of this enmity, and could not have foreseen the consequences of his own decisions. When told by Galitzin that the priesthood wished the conductors of the Bible Society to quit Russia because they were heretics, he exclaimed that he could not "endure such bigotry," and afterwards treated them in a manner which proved his words to be sincere. It was, therefore, probably more from an excessive desire of having everything, as he conceived, in its right department, than from any defined hostility to the diffusion of the Scriptures, that he transferred all the operations of the society to the "superintendence of the Holy Synod."

But this he did in a ukase, dated 15th August, 1826, and by that act closed a fountain of life which, except to the small degree hereafter to be related, has not been re-opened to the present moment.

CHAPTER VII.

Gleams.

"EUKAIROS, AKAIROS: in season, out of season."

ST. PAUL.

"For the heart grows rich in giving; all its wealth is living grain;
Seeds, which mildew in the garner, scattered, fill with gold the plain."

E. C.

"*March* 29, 1826.—The bridge of boats set up again! Spring returning! O Thou who makest summer and winter, warm and invigorate my heart, and make all my beloved friends joyful in Thee! Shed down upon us all the precious and invigorating influences of Thy Spirit, and make us fruitful in every good word and work. I have lately sent forth some of my sermons. Gracious Father, break not the bruised reed, quench not the smoking flax, but accept and bless this feeble effort to serve Thee. Amen."

It was thus that Mr. Knill, amid increasing difficulties, girded himself afresh for his work. Only by a nearer approach to God, and a steadier faith in His promises, could he have rightly met these difficulties. The faithful fellow-labourers, who hailed him on his arrival in the country, and had proved most able and

affectionate counsellors in times of perplexity, retired from the scene, and left him more sensibly dependant on the Divine arm. His domestic sorrows had been leading in the same direction. To his correspondent at Bideford he writes, "I think I have never had my mind so much in heaven as since the death of my beloved daughter. Thus our gracious God makes all things to work together for good." The death of his parents, too, which now occurred, awoke many solemn and tender recollections of his former life :—

JOURNAL.—"*June* 20, 1826, *Lord's-day*.—Preached in the evening, from Rev. xiv. 13, a funeral sermon for my honoured mother. She and my father were married about 55 years, and, I think, for about 30 years she has been a disciple of Jesus. For four or five years she has been confined almost every hour to her bed, and latterly she seemed to have lost all recollection. A few hours only before her departure she had the use of her reason restored, and she began to pray. Her last words were 'Eliza, pray ;' and so she yielded up the ghost, having just completed her 80th year. Lord,

give me grace to follow Thee, as she followed Thee. Oh, how warm was her love, how great her attachment to the Word and house of God! May all her relatives be like her!"

"*December* 11.—A letter from my niece states that my dear father is very ill; that she had received a letter from him on one week, and on the next, a message, that he was not able to write."

Perhaps the following touching passage in a letter to the family at Loveacott ought not to be withheld:—

"Often have I exclaimed, when passing through the streets of this splendid city, 'Oh that all was right with my father's soul, and that he considered his latter end!' I am happy to think there is any change of a consoling nature; but we want things to be very sure for ourselves and our friends before we can take comfort in their death. People who know not what conversion is, take it for granted that all their friends go to heaven, particularly if they receive the sacrament on their death-bed; but we know how deceptive all these things are. A new heart and a right

spirit—a creation unto holiness by the Spirit of Christ—is what we need, and without it we must perish." He was not without reason to hope that such prayers had been graciously answered before the event which he thus records:—"In the afternoon, received a letter announcing the death of my dear and honoured father, on the 15th December, 1826."

Meanwhile, the peace and usefulness of the little church suffered no interruption. "I am happy to inform you," he writes to his faithful correspondent in Edinburgh, "that a few have been united to us in church fellowship since Dr. Paterson left us. The Lord gives us unbounded reason for thankfulness for personal and domestic comforts. I heard from good Princess Metschersky last week. She is at her estates near Tver, living among her serfs, and trying to do them all the good in her power. I never perceived her heart so much affected with their spiritual misery as she appears now to be. She is capable of doing much to enlighten their darkened minds. Oh, Miss Ross, how shall we sufficiently adore the Lord for His goodness to us in making us experiment-

ally acquainted with His love and power, in giving us to *taste* and *see* that He is good! How shall we praise that matchless Redeemer who undertook our cause, and gave us His Holy Spirit to be our Comforter! Is it not wonderful that we think so little of it? May we in future feel it more, and exemplify our attachment to Him in a more lively manner. Amen."

To the same correspondent, a few months later, he mentions the continued prosperity of one of the most useful of the institutions:—

"The gentlemen of the committee charged me to return their sincere thanks for your continued favours to the school; the Lord reward you, and all who contribute to its support. A few days since we had our annual examination. Oh, how gratifying was the sight! Many of the young people attended who were formerly scholars with us, but are now apprenticed to various tradesmen in the city. Their appearance was peculiarly encouraging. We never had so many children in attendance as we now have. Sometimes there are sixty girls simultaneously at work on various kinds of gar

ments and useful articles for families. They can make every garment usually worn by women, which enables some of them already to support themselves, and many who have left the school support also their friends."

His pastoral vigilance continued to be attended by many encouraging incidents. "On the 29th of June, 1826," he writes to the Rev. J. Arundel, "I one day called on a watchmaker, lately become pious, to ask him where I could buy a good spy-glass. 'If you want a good spy-glass,' said he, 'I should like to speak with you on that subject.' 'Proceed, if you please.' 'The summer before you arrived, I bought a beautiful spy-glass in a walking-stick, for my amusement on Sundays; but God in His mercy has enabled you to direct me to objects more glorious than that glass discovers. I have now better work for Sundays, and have no further use for the glass. I beg you to accept it as a trophy of the grace of God; keep it, sir, as an encouragement in your labours of love, and be assured that it was only the same power that sent the Otaheitan idols to the Missionary Museum that brought that glass to

you.' I have it as a valuable and precious testimony to the power of God. The former owner of it is a bright Christian; many also of his relatives have become pious."

A circumstance of a similar kind affords a lively illustration of his manner, which was at once kind, bold, and discriminating. A Russian whom he had employed in the capacity of a tailor having called one day when he was engaged with a gentleman, he asked him to sit down, handing him at the same moment a tract in the English language, which he knew he could read.

I soon returned, and paid him his bill, and as he was going away, he said—

"I hope you are pleased with your coat?"

"Yes," I replied, "I am much pleased with my coat; how are you pleased with my book?"

"Oh," said he, "I never trouble myself about books."

"Do you not? I am sorry for that, sir; you are getting an old man, and if you do not trouble yourself about books, I fear there is something else which you neglect."

"What is that, sir?"

"Why, your precious soul. 'And what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

"Ah," said he, "I guess what you mean; you think I ought to become religious."

"Yes, that is it."

"Bless you, sir," he replied, "it would be impossible for me to carry on my large business if I were religious."

"You astonish me, sir. How would religion interfere with your business?"

"Why, if I were religious, then I must go to church on Sundays."

"To be sure you would; aye, and you would rejoice when Sunday came, that you might hear something of God and salvation."

"I tell you, sir, that would be impossible with my business. I have thirty men, and I pay most of my bills, and receive most of my money, on Sunday; it is my busiest day."

"What! do you never go to church?"

"Never."

"This is worse and worse, sir. You say

you do not read good books, and you do not go to church; depend upon it you are going to hell. I have long thought that no man would go to heaven merely because he read the Bible and went to church; but I am deeply convinced that the man who neglects these things is not going to heaven. How can you live so? Do you not believe there is a God?"

At this he looked angrily at me, and said, "God, sir! God! Have you ever seen God?"

At this I trembled to think how far down a man might sink in his iniquity, and I replied —"I have not seen God, but I have seen you, and you are one of God's works."

"Very well," said he, "when you meet with any one who has seen God, please to let me know it. Good morning, sir."

The old man then took his leave, and I saw him no more until I met him at the funeral of the friend who had introduced him to me. This excellent man was seized with typhus fever, and died; and great lamentation was made over him. The funeral sermon was numerously attended, and among them I saw the Russian tailor, and the tears rolling down his

aged cheeks, but I could not tell whether it was anything that I said, or the death of my friend that so deeply affected him. On the following Sabbath, I saw him present again; on the second Sabbath again; and on the third Sabbath again. This was very strange to see; yet I was afraid to call upon him, lest he might take the alarm and keep away altogether; but I said to one of my friends, "Did you see Mr. B——?"

"Yes," said he; "I can tell you something very interesting about that old man."

"Indeed! what, sir?"

"He has purchased an English Bible, and says he is determined to read it; yes, and to read it all through, to see whether what you say is true or not."

"Then," said I, "there is hope of him. There is always hope of a man when he begins to read the Bible with attention."

I now found him a constant attendant on week-days as well as Lord's-days, and I often saw his countenance lighted up with joy; but I never spoke to him until one Saturday night I was sitting in my study, when my wife

entered, saying, "There is a stranger inquiring for you."

"Who is it?"

"I do not know, but I think it is the Russian tailor."

So I walked out, and there I saw him. He began: "Saturday night is not just the time to call on you, Mr. Knill, but I have a little business."

"What business, sir?"

"One of your hearers wished to present you with a new coat, and I have brought it; I hope you will not be angry."

I answered—"I am not in the habit of being angry with any person, but especially with one who would give me a new coat; pray, what kind and considerate friend has done this?"

"Ah," said he, "that is a part of the business; he will not tell you his name."

"Is it a young man?"

He answered—"No."

"Is it an old man?"

"Yes, an old man with a grey head."

There he stood by my side, with his hair as

white as milk, but I had no conception that he was the man.

"Perhaps, sir, you will tell my wife who it was?"

"Yes, I am not bound to keep it from her."

So I left them, and he told my wife that he was the person who had given me this coat. Of course, I soon knew it; and very peculiar were the feelings produced in my mind by the transaction.

"Now, sir, I know who my benefactor is, and I am greatly obliged to you for this kindness; but do tell me what induced you to give me the coat?"

At this he burst into tears, and said—"Ah, sir, if God had not changed my heart I never should have thought of giving you the coat."

"Thank you," said I, "for this explanation, and if it be connected with a change of heart, then the coat is invaluable."

He then gave me a striking proof that his heart was changed indeed. He began to consult me about the spiritual good of his people.

"I want to ask you, sir, what I should do for my men? I feel very much about their

souls. What do you think I should do for them? Should I give them copies of the Testament?"

I was delighted to behold this mark of spiritual life, and urged him by all means to give them the Scriptures. This encouraged him. His youth seemed renewed like the eagles'. He ran home, and called his men together, and said to them—"Can you read?"

"Yes, sir, I read Swedish."

To another—"Can you read?"

"Yes, sir, I read German."

To a third—"Can you read?"

"Yes, I read Finnish."

To a fourth—"Can you read?"

"Yes, I read Russ."

Having ascertained how many of his people could read, and in what languages, he came to me again, saying—"Now, sir, so many books in so many languages; for I am resolved that no man shall remain in my employ, who is able to read, without a copy of the blessed New Testament."

"The inquiry he thus made led to another discovery. He not only fouud out who could

read, but he also found out who could not read, and for them he bought spelling-books, and set the readers to teach them; for he also resolved that every man and boy in his works who could not read should be instructed.

"In addition to all this, he usually spent half an hour in the evening with them in reading and expounding the Scriptures. The sight was at once novel, amusing, and affecting. The old man would fix upon a chapter, then they would all read the same verse in their different languages, and then the master would give them a short exposition of it in the Russian language, which they all understood. By this means his house passed through as great a change as the master. Instead of being polluted with worldly occupations on the Lord's-day, now every day was turned into a Sabbath. Prayer, and praise, and religious instruction were carried on daily. The voice of joy, thanksgiving, and praise, was heard in the tabernacle of the righteous."*

In the midst of these and other evidences of the Divine blessing, which cheered his

* "The Russian Tailor." Religious Tract Society.

naturally trustful and hopeful spirit, the year approached its close.

"*December* 26.—Mr. Mirrielees has arrived from Moscow, and gives a very interesting account of all our friends. It is now finally settled *(D.V.)* that Mr. Parkinson shall leave for Rotherham College, about June next. Thus from our dear little congregation, Mr. Von Essen, Mr. James Lyon, and Mr. Parkinson have chosen that blessed work, which surely is to be preferred above all others.—Gracious Lord, Thou hast all fulness in Thyself; in mercy supply these Thy servants out of Thy infinite store. Amen.

"*Wednesday*, 29.—Preached in the evening on those beautiful words, 'Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness,' and it becomes me to look back with gratitude on a year of mercies.

"Blessed be Thy holy name, for every temporal comfort and every domestic blessing: for the means of grace—precious Sabbaths and sacramental feasts—not one of which has failed; for help from dear Dr. Paterson when I was sick; for several excellent persons added

to the Church, and for others who give evidence of a concern for their souls. O my God and Father, my Saviour, Friend, and Portion, bless Thou my dear people—cause true and undefiled religion to increase and flourish!"

CHAPTER VIII.

Blue Skies.

"Who best
Can suffer, best can do; best reign who first
Well hath obeyed."

MILTON.

BLUE SKIES.

Two years from the period of the Bible Society's suppression had scarcely passed, before the darkness, which then threatened to close in upon all evangelical efforts in the country, began to clear away, and to disclose a field of exertion somewhat proportioned to Mr. Knill's large desires and irrepressible energy. Such a blessing could have come only to the watchfulness and patience of true faith. The haste of an indevout zeal would have been fatal to its approach; for, while the law had not forbidden the circulation of existing copies of the Scriptures in any language, a premature activity would have excited alarm and opposition. When the right time came, the prison doors were opened as by the touch of an angel. Mr. Knill's review of the circumstances is as follows :—

"After the departure of my honoured friends,

Drs. Paterson, Pinkerton, and Henderson, the Bible Society's house was transferred to other hands, and tens of thousands of precious books were shut up in warehouses; a small depôt being kept open, and a poor monk put in charge to sell them. Few persons seemed to have courage to ask for a book; but God, who is 'wonderful in counsel and excellent in working,' at last raised up an instrumentality to bring out the buried treasure. There is a small island in the Baltic called Hogland, containing a few hundred inhabitants, who subsist chiefly by fishing. They speak the Finnish language, and belong, nominally, to the Lutheran Church. They had neither doctor nor minister among them, when a pious young Lutheran clergyman, hearing of their situation, hired a small vessel in order to visit them. As the little bark neared the island, the adults came to the landing-place, to see what he wanted. 'I want,' said he, 'to see all the grown-up people in the island; call them, for I have a message to deliver.' The people collected, and he preached to them, for about an hour, on the words, 'Behold, I bring

you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' The people were astonished and delighted, and, at the close of his address, said—'This is an angel. Oh! will you stay among us, and be our pastor? If you will, we shall give you fish, and oil, and candles, which is all we have.

"He was not a little pleased with his 'entrance in unto them,' but replied, 'I cannot live upon what you kindly offer, but I will go to St. Petersburg and see if I can get a few friends to help me, and, if I succeed, I will come back to you.' He then took leave, and started for St. Petersburg; told his story to Madam Götzen, the widow of an admiral, who often attended my ministry, and asked, 'Will you support me?' The lady said, 'Mr. Knill is often speaking on such subjects to his congregation, and I think, if I call and inform him about it, his people will stand by you.' 'Yes,' I replied, when she came to me, 'I know they will; I know my men, and I never applied in vain.' The admiral's widow went to

encourage the missionary, and I set off to my pious and devoted friends. They immediately subscribed what was needful, and he sailed soon for the island, leaving two boxes in my possession, which I was to send by a vessel a few weeks after. I was preparing his boxes, putting in clothes, medicines, and other needfuls, and, on the top, some Finnish Bibles, with which Mrs. Mirrielees had furnished me. Now came the memorable moment. Just as the Bibles were passing through my hands, a milkmaid from a village called with milk. As she passed me, I said, 'Good woman, can you read?' 'Yes, sir, in my own language.'

"'What language is it?'

"'The Finnish.'

"'Oh, here is a Finnish Bible; read the 23d Psalm.'

"She read very fluently until she came to the words, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me,' and then her voice faltered; she began to weep, and returned to me the book. 'Have you a Bible?' I inquired.

"'No, sir; I never had money enough to buy one.'

"'How much money have you now?'

"'Only a ruble' (10d.)

"'Then give me,' I said, 'the ruble, and I will give you the book.'

"She looked at me with astonishment, but I said I meant what I told her, when she fumbled in her dress for the ruble, and gave it to me, and I handed her the Bible. The ecstasy of the woman cannot be described. She looked at it, opened it, shut it, and looked again, then pressed it to her heart, kissed it, and burst into tears. Seeing her so delighted, I said—'Have your neighbours any Bibles?'

"'I believe not,' she replied; 'I never saw one among them.'

"'Well, tell them of this, and inform them they may have a Bible for a ruble too.'

"'May I?' she exclaimed, and away she went.

"It happened to be market-day, when great crowds assemble. She rushed in among the people, and holding up her book, cried, 'A Bible!' 'Where did you get it?' came from

numerous voices. 'From a foreign pastor.' 'What cost it?' 'A ruble.' 'Impossible!' 'No,' said the milkmaid, 'for the man told me to say that, if you wished for one, you may have it at the same price.' On hearing that, they took her Bible from her, and gave her two rubles, saying, 'Get two Bibles for these two rubles, and we will give your Bible back again, and something for your trouble; but if not, we will keep this, because you have deceived us.'

"The poor creature came back to me, weeping, to relate the story. But I gave her the two books, and said, 'Continue to tell your neighbours of it.' She did so, and the news flew on the wings of the wind. The people went home that day with a new story, and my house was soon beset with customers. Persons who had to travel fifty versts (thirty-three miles) were at my house at the break of day, to make sure of a copy."

The emotions which this work awoke are indicated in many sentences of the Journal, such as these:—

"*October* 25, 1828.—Ordered another hun-

dred copies of Finnish Bibles. The glad tidings are spreading, and the people welcome the joyful sound. Lord, bless the precious Word, and make it a guide to heaven to every one who possesses it! Several of my friends begin to help me in this benevolent work."

"27*th*.—Wrote to Dr. Pinkerton to request him to send me £10 to help forward the glorious work. Two hundred Bibles are sold this week."

"*November* 10.—Sent for one hundred Bibles. This has been a remarkable week. The Lord has blessed me with many mercies; at present, that which appears to me the chief mercy, is the privilege of circulating the Holy Word. To whom can I go for aid, but to the friends of the Bible? Lord, incline their hearts to help me, and crown the whole with thy blessing! I am now in the seventh hundred, and they are nearly gone. More than seventy have been sold to-day."

"14*th*.—Bought another hundred Bibles. Preached in the evening from Psalm 116, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies towards me!'"

"19*th*.—The poor Fins are still coming in great numbers for Bibles; but there are no more. Oh, how grievous to see them go away without the blessed book! My God and Father, I bless Thee for enabling me to circulate so many. Sanctify Thine own Word, O Lord!"

His faith had often been put to the test. "One day," he says, "there had been a great run, and I was at a loss what to do. I went to my wife and said I was in trouble.

"'What is the matter?'

"'I can never meet the demands of the Fins at the rate I have fixed, for they are coming upon us like bees. But if I do not fulfil my promise, I am undone.'

"She very calmly replied, 'It is God's book and God's work, and, depend upon it, He will help us. Go on.'

"Being thus encouraged, I put a hundred rubles in my pocket, and was on my way for more Bibles, when the thought struck me that fifty rubles would be enough for me in the circumstances, and with the claims of my family. At that moment, passing the end of a street, I

lifted up my eyes, and saw a funeral. It was enough. That funeral preached me a sermon from the text, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device in the grave, whither thou goest.' I felt ashamed and humbled at the thought which had been working in my breast, and went off, and invested my money in the Bibles. Then I drew up a short letter, and sent it round to my friends, to ask their coöperation, when the Lord did help us, for in a short time the money came in, and in six weeks I sold 800 volumes."

"In distributing the Bible among strangers," he remarks in a letter, "it is not likely we shall know much of the effects produced by them while we remain in the present world; but a few happy instances have occurred within my own circle, which may be considered a fair specimen of what others may have observed. One of the most efficient of my numerous helpers is a young officer, who spends almost every holiday among the poor in the distant villages. To these poor people he carries New Testaments and tracts, and sometimes travels fifty,

eighty, or even a hundred versts a day in his labours of love. In one of his excursions he met with a very pious Fin. My young friend said to him, 'I rejoice to hear and see these things in this little cottage; pray, how long have you been a partaker of this felicity!' 'O sir,' said the cottager, 'I am only a young Christian. Once I was addicted to drunkenness—the common sin of our people. But last year I heard of Bibles selling at a cheap rate at Pastor Knill's. Wishing to have a Bible as well as my neighbours, I bought the book, and God has blessed it to my soul, yea, and to my wife's also. There is no intemperance in our house now, sir.'

"Again. A man, whose birthplace is far distant, came hither in the spring, and, calling at my house, bought a New Testament, which he took to his lodgings, where thirty other men boarded and lodged. Last week he called again to purchase more books. He said to Mrs. Knill, 'You have no idea of the blessing that book has been which I bought in the spring. At that time every night was spent at cards, and in drunkenness; but now the scene

is completely changed. We assemble every night around the man who reads the Word of God, and cards and drink are shut out of the place.'

"We do all we can," he adds, in the letter in which these facts are mentioned, "to promote this blessed work in a quiet and unofficial manner. The wisdom of the serpent is needed, as well as the innocence of the dove. Pray for us, that the Word of God may run and be glorified, 'even as it is with you.'"

This busy and prosperous year closes, and another opens with the following entries :—

"*December* 31, 1828.—O my God and Father, all these things concur to increase my debt of gratitude! By Thy grace I am what I am. Thy bounty feeds and clothes me, and every good and perfect gift cometh down from Thee. I feel, O Lord, that in every thing I am deficient. I end the year lamenting over my cold and selfish heart, yet adoring Thy rich, free, and sovereign love. Hallelujah.

"*January* 1, 1829.—New-year's Day. The goodness of God to me is very great. Few among the human race have so much reason

for gratitude. Lord, have mercy upon me, and help me to honour Thee! Let my services be acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Make this year peculiarly useful in the conversion of sinners; the increase of piety among true believers; the zeal of the Church; the circulation of the Holy Scriptures and other good books, and the prosperity of all things connected with Thy cause. Oh, prosper the work of our hands upon us —the work of our hands, Lord, prosper Thou it!"

The circulation of Bibles in the languages of the foreign populations of the empire was followed by a blessing still less anticipated in the dispersion of the Russian Testaments lying buried under the guardianship of the Holy Synod. Though no edict forbade the purchase of these books, the old monk left in charge of them held but a nominal office. His peace was invaded in the following manner:

"A young person in my congregation, who was converted to God, and threw a great deal of energy into her religion, one morning called on me, and said, 'Next week is my name's day,

and our servants will expect a present. They can all read, and what can I give them so good as a Russian Testament?'

"'Nothing,' I replied.

"'Well, will you please to get some Russian Testaments for me?'

"'I will try,' I responded; and set off with a light heart to the dear old Bible House.

"'Can I have some Russian Testaments?' I inquired, cautiously.

"'Yes, said the keeper; 'you can have 10,000 this week, and 10,000 next week, if you please. The damp is rotting and the moth devouring them.'

"Alas! I thought on my way home, this is dreadful! Oh, that I could indeed get out 10,000! It soon occurred to me that we had one warm friend in Scotland, who had taken an interest especially in the Jewish children of the schools, and had written in a way which convinced me she had much love to God. This, I thought, is the friend to apply to in this emergency. I gave her an account of what we had been doing, and what we wished to do, and said that, if she could set us agoing with £10,

we should not, when once in motion, soon stop."

JOURNAL.—"*January* 31, 1829.—To the glory of God be it recorded, that I this day received a letter from dear Miss Ross of Edenburgh, in answer to mine of the 17th of November, authorizing me to draw for £50 to carry on the delightful work of circulating the Holy Scriptures. O my soul, never forget this loving kindness; let it encourage thee and stimulate thee to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the blessed Master's work, nothing doubting that He will raise up friends to aid His own cause."

"I asked you," he writes to this lady, for £10, and you sent me £50, which made me feel in a very remarkable manner that the Lord was with me. I knelt down and adored Him, and entreated blessings for you and for the friends who might have helped you to send so large a sum. I soon communicated the glad tidings to those excellent friends who are my coadjutors in every good work, and they have assisted me in giving an extensive circulation to the precious Word. About thirty

copies a-day for the last two weeks has been the average demand. I have sold forty to-day with my own hands."

"Among many pleasing instances of usefulness, one is that of a Russian servant in my own house. When she first came to us, she could read a little, and my wife encouraged her to persevere, and for this purpose a Psalter and Testament were given to her. She seemed to take great delight in reading, and we were gratified to perceive how she improved every spare moment for this sacred employ. The first time she evinced any emotion was one evening when she had been reading the history of Cornelius. She came to my wife with an anxious and inquiring look, and said, 'Please to explain this to me: Cornelius fasted, prayed to God always, and gave much alms to the people; yet he was commanded to send for Peter to obtain information what he ought to do. Pray, how is this? What could he do more? Is any more required of us than to pray, give alms, and keep the fast?'

"Mrs. Knill answered, 'If something more had not been necessary, the angel would not

have commanded it; therefore, proceed with the narrative, and mark what Peter said.' She proceeded; and when she read these words, 'To him gave all the prophets witness, that through His name, whosoever believeth on Him shall have remission of sins,' the poor young creature was overcome. She burst into a flood of tears, and soon exclaimed, 'Now, I see it; it is by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ that we obtain forgiveness of sins.' From that day to this her delight has been in the Scriptures. Her diligence in business, and her zeal for the salvation of her relatives, makes her very highly esteemed by us; and, as far as we can judge, she adorns the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things. Erena, which was the name of this young woman, proved a great treasure to Mr. Knill's family.

As no funds existed for the supply of Bibles, sold considerably under the cost price, Mr. Knill was obliged to add to the labour of distribution that of an extensive correspondence. In the following letter to Joseph Nunneley, Esq., of Leicester, a general view is given of his position on the 21st May, 1829:—

"A delightful work is going on amongst us, far, very far beyond what I ever anticipated. The Word of the Lord is spreading extensively amongst people who had not possessed a copy of the Divine volume before, many of whom had scarcely ever heard of it, and who, a few years ago, were unable to read. During the reign of the Emperor Alexander, the education of the lower orders became an object of consideration, and tens of thousands were taught to read. This was a notable feature in the reign of Alexander, and it is an animating thought that his majesty the Emperor Nicholas is carrying on the great work on an enlarged and improved scale. By this means, books will be more and more called for, and what more important than the Book of God? Blessed, for ever blessed be His holy name for giving us the means, the disposition, and the opportunity of circulating it!

"In my last to you, I stated that 800 Bibles had been sold, since which time I have circulated above 2,200 other books, some Bibles, chiefly New Testaments, and a few hundred Psalters. These are not confined to any par-

ticular language, but embrace the Sclavonian, German, Swedish, Finnish, Polish, Esthonian, French, and English. I have now entered on the sale of the fourth thousand, and, by the help of the Lord and His people, shall not cease to attempt thousand upon thousand until I can work no longer. Please to accept my grateful acknowledgments for your liberal assistance. I trust the Lord will bless it to the good of many a poor sinner. It was a timely aid ; for though I wrote eighteen letters, I received an answer only from you and three others—the Tract Society, Mr. Lewis of Islington, and a lady of Edinburgh ; but I have great hopes that many other friends have by this time sent me something, though I have not yet heard from them. The British and Foreign Bible Society, with their usual generosity, offered me 500 copies of the Finnish Testament, but I have declined receiving *books ;* it might be dangerous. *Here* are books in abundance, sanctioned and authorized to be sold ; so that, in circulating them, I violate no law. But strange books from other countries might be viewed in a different

light. I hope, however, they will grant me pecuniary aid, for I shall soon exhaust the bounty of private friends. At present I am about £30 in advance, which a dear friend here has lent me, and I am proceeding with the work. I cannot relax, for surely the Lord will send us help; He began the work, and hitherto He has carried it on. Will He now permit it to cease? I think not.

"I assure you, dear sir, it was a great relief to my mind to see this door of usefulness opening to me; for my congregation is very small, and most of them, thanks be to God, are pious. I felt, therefore, that something was needful to afford useful occupation, and now we have it. Several of my little flock are most actively employed in disposing of the sacred volume; they have tasted its sweetness, and they are as thankful as I am to have the present opportunity."

The committee of the Bible Society, recognizing the propriety of Mr. Knill's unwillingness to introduce books from abroad, very liberally came to his aid with money. A correct estimate, indeed, cannot be formed of this

work, without keeping in view the peculiar union of boldness and caution, of energy and self-control, which it demanded, and which was graciously given from on high. A few lines, enclosing letters from Siberia, addressed to the Rev. William Orme, on the 12th May, 1830, will illustrate this :

"It is well known to Dr. Henderson, and he can explain it much better than can be done in a short letter, that missionaries in this country must always stand on very precarious ground. No certainty can be attached to their stay for an hour. People who have never lived here, can hardly form an idea of the state of our feelings at times, though I acknowledge with gratitude that I have never experienced anything but kindness since my arrival here, nor, I think, is it otherwise with the brethren in Siberia ; still our situation is what is stated, uncertain.

"Two of the most excellent nnd intelligent young men I have ever seen—an officer in the Russian service, and an English physician—both members of my little church, were lately apprehended for circulating New Testaments

and tracts. The former was imprisoned, and the latter was sent across the frontier, banished from the realm, in the depth of winter, at twenty-four hours' notice. This so alarmed us, that we did not know what to do; my name was associated with the affair in a certain degree, as I had supplied them with the Scriptures, and they belonged to my congregation. This they stated at their examination. I therefore expected to be seized every hour, and prepared for the event. But, blessed be God, I am permitted to remain; and although there was an interruption for some time, we have circulated 2000 Testaments and Psalters during the last three months, and tracts and school-books in great numbers. I cannot but mark the care and kindness of my adorable Redeemer in this matter. Oh, for a more entire devotedness to Him!"

In the review of this period, Mr. Knill could easily have replied to the arguments of some who questioned the necessity of two English congregations in St. Petersburg, and who could appreciate only palpable facts. such as he here enumerates.

"*October* 28, 1829.—Is it asked, Have you a Bible Society? I answer, We distributed about 6000 Bibles, Psalters, and New Testaments last year. Is it asked, Have you a Missionary Society? I answer, We support six native teachers in India, and one missionary printer in Georgia, besides sending 100 rubles annually, for general missionary purposes, to the London Missionary Society. Is it asked, Have you a School Society? Several of my congregation keep schools, and have upwards of 200 children under their tuition. Is it asked, Have you a Tract Society? I answer, We distribute many tracts in various languages, and have more than 50,000 on hand for distribution. Is it asked, Have you a School-book Society? I answer, We furnish hundreds of people with the authorized school-books of the country at a low price. Is it asked, Do you provide clothes for the poor? I answer, We have a Dorcas Society, by which hundreds are clothed. Is it asked, Do you take care of the sick? I answer, We have two pious doctors, besides other friends, who give every possible attention to these.—O God, the

author of every good and perfect gift, what shall I render to Thee for all these mercies, and all these favours? How blessed is the man who lives among so devoted and loving a people!"

CHAPTER IX.

Shadows of the Pestilence.

"The tree
Sucks kindlier nurture from a soil enriched
By its own fallen leaves; and man is made,
In heart and spirit, from deciduous hopes,
And things that seem to perish."

SHADOWS OF THE PESTILENCE.

Mr. Knill did not expect, of course, that his path in God's service would long remain unmarked by tribulation ; but he scarcely anticipated that the pestilence, which dismissed him from India, would confront him again among the snows of Russia. Yet that terrible messenger was commissioned to give a sober colouring to all the transactions of the two years upon which we now enter, and finally to cast a deep shadow over his cheerful home. The year after the cholera ravaged the peninsula of India, it proceeded to China, and the islands of the adjacent archipelago. Three years later, it entered the Russian territory, at Astrachan, and, having warned Europe, withdrew for seven years. At the close of that period it reäppeared in the same city, and, steadily advancing along the shore of the Volga, reached Moscow in the autumn of 1830, and St. Petersburg in the summer of 1831.

The sense of the presence of this power will make itself apparent in most of the letters and entries now to be quoted; but as it did not interrupt, but rather quickened exertion, the usual record of the mixed occurrences of successive days, will convey the most faithful picture of the time. Early in the summer, a family, which had conferred no small honour on the little church, and had contributed incalculably to the personal happiness of Mr. Knill, sailed for their native country.

"*June* 25, 1830.—*Wednesday*.—At five this evening I set off in Mr. Baird's steamer for Cronstadt, with our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Venning, on their way to England. I spent a part of every day with them this week, breakfasted with them this morning, and united with them for the last time in prayer. It was a most affecting season.—Lord, sanctify these trying scenes! I know Thou art able. Oh yes; Thou canst make darkness light before us, and every bitter thing sweet.—The recollection of what they have done for me calls for my deepest gratitude, and the knowledge of the good they have received from my ministry,

should ever fill my heart with praise.—Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, but Thou, O God, givest the increase.—We went on board the Dutch steamship, which is to carry our friends to Travemunde, and at half-past nine we took an affectionate farewell, and left them.—O my God, do Thou be ever with them, to guide, comfort, strengthen, and make them very useful. Wherever they go, do Thou make them to shine as lights in the world.

"*June* 26.—At Cronstadt. Slept little during the night; thought being busy with the dear friends from whom I had parted. They have been for many years the most kind, tender, generous, loving friends that ever I had in my life, and, blessed be God, their love increased rather than diminished, as our separation drew near. They have left me their house to dwell in for a season. What a favour is this!

"*July* 21.—Galèrnay Street. Many and great were the blessings which God granted me in the last house. Thousands of poor sinners have seen or heard of that house in the Fanàrnay, from which they received Bibles,

Testaments, Psalters, prayer-books, and tracts. —Lord, I will praise Thee for that mercy; graciously grant that the house into which I have now entered may also prove to be a house for Thee. It has already been a 'house of prayer,' a 'refuge for the needy,' and 'as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' Lord, help me here to honour Thee, for Jesus' sake.

"*August* 11.—Heard from the Rev. W. Glen of Astrachan. Great distress prevailing on account of the cholera-morbus. Mr. G. has told me where to find his will in case of his death.—Yet, O Lord, preserve him to advance Thy glory. Amen."

Mr. Knill received the letter referred to in this notice on the evening of Saturday, and when he appeared on the Sunday morning, his people instantly perceived its effects on his countenance. To explain himself, he read those parts of it which described the entrance of the disease into the Mission House at Astrachan; how it struck down one of the missionaries, and then the wife of the Sarepta Commissioner; and how, after the funeral of

that lady, the bereaved husband, fleeing with his three motherless children, was overtaken and buried by the roadside, three stages from the city. The painful picture was relieved by an account of the almost miraculous recovery of Mrs. Glen; and when the words of her husband were given, "I cannot tell you how it comforted me, while I stood in awful suspense by her side, to see her confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners," Mr. Knill turned to the congregation, and addressed to them the most moving appeals to make instant preparation for meeting God, and closed with an invitation to all who felt that they had committed themselves to Christ, to commemorate, with the church, on that morning, at His table, His dying love. "It was a season," says one who was present, "not to be forgotten; and, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, is still fresh on the page of memory."

"*September* 15, 1830.—Held a meeting at my house to beseech the Lord to preserve us from the cholera.

"*September* 21.—Remarkable day. In the morning a man from the hospital came for

Hebrew, Tartar, Finnish, and Russian Testaments; and I had the pleasure of supplying them.

"*September* 28.—In the evening preached on the ministry of angels: a solemn and delightful theme in times like the present, when men's hearts are failing them for fear. A letter arrived to-day from Mr. Mirrielees, dated sixty versts from St. Petersburg, where he is performing quarantine; many are detained there, and many more at the next station. Every precaution is adopted to keep the cholera from the city. Lord, bless the measures of government, and hear our prayers!

"*September* 29.—This is the anniversary of the beginning of my Bible operations. O Lord, I will praise Thee. In these two years nearly 14,000 have been circulated; besides prayer-books, school-books, and tracts, to the amazing number of 120,000 copies. Sanctify this, O Lord, to the good of families and individuals, and towns and villages. Amen."

The tracts to which reference is here made were those which had been prepared by the Princess Metschersky. This excellent person,

whose name has now several times occurred on these pages, was brought to a knowledge of Christ during the residence of Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Pinkerton as a tutor in her family. While he instructed her daughters she remained in the room, and became by degrees deeply interested in the religious ideas which he expressed. She was thus led to a close private examination of the Scriptures, and at length exclaimed to her friend, "While you have taught my children, the Spirit of God has taught me." From that time, though retaining connexion with the Greek Church in accordance with the absolute law of the country and her own general convictions, she surrendered her property and fine talents to the dissemination of the gospel in her native land. Her first work was to translate into Russian the delightful narratives of Legh Richmond—"The Negro Servant," "The Young Cottager," and "The Dairyman's Daughter;" and her intimate acquaintance with the Emperor Alexander enabled her to put these translations, together with various sermons and select passages from the writings of the more evangeli-

cal authors of her own church, into extensive circulation. They were finding their way over the length and breadth of Russia, when the opposition of the priesthood to the Bible Society took a visible form. Fearing that all was over at that period, she placed the entire stock, amounting to about 200,000 copies, in the hands of Mr. Knill, by whom a large number were assorted and bound in volumes, and all of them at length so skilfully used, that in a few years hardly a single copy remained on the shelves.

Even he scarcely ventured to hope that while the ecclesiastical temper remained as it did, any of those narratives would be reprinted. But in this, as in many other instances, the the mercy of God "prevented him." "A few weeks since," he writes to Mr. Alers Hankey, on the 14th of October, 1830, "I had one of the happiest days of my life. We had applied for permission to print a new edition of Legh Richmond's 'Young Cottager,' and were kept in suspense for many days. At last the license came, signed and sealed by the spiritual censor, who is the highest authority in these mat-

ters. It was translated many years ago by our dear Princess, but we have no copies on hand, and have often feared that we should never see it reprinted. It was an answer to many prayers, and when it came, I called my family together to praise the Lord for his peculiar favour.

"Remembering the good adage, 'Make hay while the sun shines,' we immediately set to work to print an edition of 10,000 copies. The kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the governor among the nations. He will provide the means. I have paid for the paper, and we are expecting the needful help from friends to whom application has been made."

The work thus recommenced proceeded most auspiciously. Applications made to the censor for permission to issue new editions and new translations, not only of tracts, but of elementary school-books and Scripture-lessons, were received with uniform favour. In some instances in which leave was withheld, the reasons assigned showed so correct a knowledge, not only of the requirements of the Russian mind, but of religious truth, that the re-

fusal had a greater value than would have belonged to an indiscriminating license.

"Last week," he writers to Mr. Alers Hankey, on 14th October, "we put into circulation 1400 New Testaments, 526 Psalters, 550 school-books, and 6,700 tracts. We never had such a week before, and of course it cannot be considered an average specimen of our labours. I merely mention it as an interesting fact. I sent away all that remained of the 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain.' In the year 1819 the dear Princess Metschersky printed an edition of this tract at her own expense, and I have no doubt that the Lord has blessed her pious efforts, for it was a favourite book with the peasantry. But they are gone. The shelf on which they stood is empty. I have therefore reserved two copies to print from, and one I have sent to Hannah More, its celebrated authoress. I have told her our exact situation, and implored her aid to print another edition. A word from her lips, or a line from her pen, to the opulent friends of the Redeemer, would quickly procure for us all we want."

A few months later, he says to another cor-

rcspondent, "In the autumn I wrote to that aged disciple, the eminent Hannah More, requesting her to aid us in reprinting the 'Shepherd of Salisbury Plain;' and a few weeks ago I received a letter from a friend of hers, with £20, for an edition of 5000 of this beautiful tract. Hallelujah! We are at the same time printing several others, such as 'The Doctrine of the Cross of Christ," 'An Address to those who Neglect the Great Salvation,' 'Reflections at the Close of the Year," &c., making altogether, in the course of twelve months, about one million three hundred *pages* of tracts. O God of mercy, pour out Thy Spirit to prepare men's hearts, and to water the seed, that an abundant harvest of holiness, righteousness and peace may be reaped here, and 'in the world to come eternal life!' Do you know a little book, entitled, 'Hymns for Infant Minds,' by Jane Taylor, and her sister, Mrs. Gilbert? This sweet work has lately been translated into Russ. One edition has gone, and another is in the press. The translator, who is a fine character, has also trans lated Dr. Watts' 'Divine and Moral Songs for

Children,' of which an edition has been printed. This is likely to be of unspeakable advantage to the rising generation. The Lord grant it?"

This year also closes with gratitude.

"*December* 24, 1830.—Arrived at Cronstadt this day ten years ago. Lord, how rich and free have been thy mercies towards me! In looking back on these years, how much have I to bless Thee for! I am stronger in body—surrounded by new friends—have a dear wife and three sweet little boys—a good prayer-meeting, and as large a congregation as I could expect in a foreign land—many pious people raised up through my labours, and others helped forward in the good way—books circulating continually—ten thousand tracts printed already, and more expected—my house open all day long for the ignorant, the poor, the wretched, and friends here almost daily providing for their wants. Oh, help me, Lord, to show forth Thy praise! Text in the evening, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'"

The Journal opens the new year with the

sentence—"Mr. Drury dined with us." But except by an emphatic line below the words, it was not reckoned prudent, even in that private record, to do more to explain their meaning. The allusion is to the officer in the Russian service who had been imprisoned for circulating Testaments and tracts, and of whose release Mr. Knill afterwards wrote thus :—

"On Passion Week—the week when Russians 'do exploits,' in the way of favours and forgiving offences—an order was sent to the captain to come to the place for his sword. To our delight we saw him pass our window in full uniform. Dear fellow, he almost fainted when he entered our house. When he recovered, he said, 'Go and make my mother acquainted with this; but do it gently, for she thinks she shall never see me any more.' I carried the news, but could scarcely gain credence for it. In the course of two hours, however, he was in the bosom of his family. He was afterwards honourably received by his comrades. On Easter-day, the princes, governors, and chief men of the State, visit the palace to congratulate the Emperor; and on

Easter Monday, generals hold levées to receive the congratulations of all their officers. Captain Drury went when the audience-hall was thronged. On his name being announced, the general arose and kissed him, and then introducing him to the officers, said, 'Here, brothers, is Captain Drury, the first officer of our army who was ever imprisoned for *doing good*.'"

Notwithstanding his interest in Russia, Mr. Knill never forgot North Devon. "You have scarcely any conception," he writes to Mr. Rooker, "of the feelings a Bideford letter produces on me. It awakens a thousand slumbering ideas, and furnishes a boundless source of thought, meditation, prayer, and praise. What, then, do you think were my feelings, two days ago, when not fewer than three letters arrived? They were, indeed, written eight months ago, and have been travelling almost ever since; but after visiting our mission at Selinginsk, Siberia, in the 106th degree of east longitude, they have reached me safely. . . . . My delighted spirit frequently hovers over the consecrated spot which you inhabit. In one of

my preaching visits to Chichester, I purchased a second-hand volume of the 'History of Bideford,' and I often read a few of the pages with a kind of melancholy pleasure, on account of joys departed. For you, my dear sir, I feel a growing love and veneration. Perhaps we shall never more meet in this world, but we shall meet before the throne of our great Redeemer, to tell His love, and to sing His praise." The interest often expressed in sentences similar to these, exhibited itself also in various actual endeavours to promote the religious welfare of his native county. While denying himself many additions to his personal comfort, and using every exertion to find means for maintaining his projects for the good of Russia, he contributed largely to the education of several young persons in Devonshire, who afterwards filled situations of usefulness. He frequently sent also, in the kindest manner, pecuniary presents to poor and aged persons, as an expression of his love; and village ministers were often comforted by a timely gift, under the form of a provision for preaching a sermon for the Sunday-school, or

to the young. Even during this year of anxiety he found time to originate, and carry through all its details, the little plan which he thus describes :—

"Sunday night is generally a sleepless one with me, arising from the excitement of the past day. During one of these nights my thoughts wandered back to the scenes of my early days, and when I arose, I penned the following particulars, which I presented to my friends :—'When I was young, the place of my nativity, and the numerous villages which surrounded us, were enveloped in gross moral darkness. I never heard of more than one pious person living at that time in any of those places; but it has pleased God since that period to make a glorious change. At present I believe there are a few pious people in all these villages. In the greater part of them the gospel is preached, and each village has its Sunday-school. It is to assist these Sunday-schools that I particularly desire your aid.'"

This introduction was followed by the name and a brief notice of each village; and the paper having found its way into the palace,

prompted the very kind act of the Empress which is thus noted in the Journal :—

"*May* 25, 1831.—In the course of the week a singular providential circumstance brought my intention of assisting the eleven Sunday schools to the notice of her Imperial Majesty the Empress. She was so pleased with the proposal that, unsolicited, she gave one hundred rubles, which I ordered to be laid out in twenty-two Bibles, two to be assigned to each school."

"This peculiar kindness," he writes to his brother, when defining the terms on which the books were to be given, "in one so exalted, shows us how easy it is for God to raise up friends to His cause ; and I sincerely hope, that when the teachers and children know this, it will excite an unusual degree of interest among them, and that every young person in the various villages will strive to obtain the imperial gift. It will be very gratifying to me to know that, in connection with these books, hundreds of young persons have treasured up in their memories the precious chapters appointed."

On each of the twenty-two Bibles were inscribed the words :—"The gift of her Imperial Majesty the Empress of Russia ;" and on each of double the number of Testaments :—"The gift of an English lady at the Court of Russia."

From this characteristically ingenious and kind attempt to benefit the villagers of Devon, he was called to receive solemn instruction within the circle of his own family. In the early part of June, he escaped from the sudden and excessive heat of the city, and thus wrote to Mr. Rooker :—"My wife and children are with me in a summer residence, provided for us by the munificence of an American merchant, where, after a seven months' winter, we have the lovely sight of the green grass, the butter-cup, the lily of the valley, and the mountain ash ; where we can walk in the sequestered grove, listen to the notes of the nightingale, and gaze upon all God's wondrous works. It is a great comfort to my children to have this sweet liberty, for they were shut up in the house for the space of five months—that is, while the severity of

the winter lasted. It is a peculiar mark of Divine favour to us that I became acquainted with this American friend, and I trust he has been a gainer by it too, as it respects the things which are eternal. . . . . Our Samuel is growing a fine boy ; so is John ; and Joseph bids fair to be a stout, healthy and kind-hearted child. They were all born in August: Samuel, August 12, 1825 ; John, August 1, 1827 ; Joseph, August 3, 1829. I should not write these little things to you, if I were not sure that you would be gratified to know them."

From this pleasant retreat he suddenly returned, under circumstances afterwards to be explained ; and on the 26th of June, O.S., 1831, addressed W. Alers Hankey, Esq., thus: —"I write to you, honoured and dear friend, to let you know that, up to this hour, my dear wife, the children, and myself, are free from cholera-morbus, but the attacks on some of our acquaintances have been very sudden, and from all appearances they are likely to be fatal. If it should please my Divine Master to send for me *now*, I trust He will graciously admit me into His presence, 'where there is

fulness of joy.' I am happy to inform you, also, that my wife has no fears on this head, neither are we at all afraid of the malady. God in His mercy keeps us tranquil, and we go wherever duty seems to call. This is the case with several of my most active friends. Now is the time for the fruits of faith to appear, and I rejoice that they do appear. I write as from the brink of eternity ; and if I die suddenly, and have not another opportunity of writing, I beg you, and the society at large, to take care of my wife and children ; and I pray God to draw your hearts towards them, and be to them fathers, guardians, and friends, and I believe He will. He knows, for He knows all things, that I have endeavoured, though feebly, yet sincerely, to serve Him, and He will not abandon His servants, nor their seed. Praise, honour, glory, and thanksgiving be unto His name! All my accounts with you, and with the Bible Society, stand fairly written out in two separate books, by which, at a glance, it will be seen how matters stand."

The history of the following month can be

written only by his own pen. The directors of the London Missionary Society he thus addressed, on the 20th July, O.S., 1831 :—

"HONOURED AND BELOVED,—The dealings of our heavenly Father with me for the last few weeks have been peculiarly solemn! Tears have been my meat day and night. My wife and myself, and our children and servants, have been brought very low, and two of my darling children are numbered with the dead. These trials came upon us so rapidly, that I was struck dumb. I was overwhelmed. My flesh trembled for fear of His judgments, yet my heart cleaved to Him as my God, my Father, and my Friend.

"My mind is now regaining its tranquillity, and my poor frame is daily recovering strength, and I feel that it would be a relief to write to you. I shall therefore give you a distant view of the scenes through which we have passed.

"A little before brother Swan left us, we received 300 rubles from our dear friend, J. D. Lewis, Esq., for the express purpose of procuring a summer residence in the country; and thither my wife and children repaired, on

Tuesday the 26th of May, O.S. I stopped a few days with them now and then, as circumstances permitted, and found it very invigorating after the busy scenes of a long winter.

"On Wednesday the 17th of June, there was great alarm in the city, on account of the *cholera*. It was reported that the city would be shut, and a cordon placed round it. Three families near us immediately returned to town, that they might procure medical aid if needed, &c. My duty was plain as it regarded myself—I ought to be with my flock; but it was not so plain respecting my family—for it is a serious step to take a family, in full health, into a place infected with disease. We thought and prayed much on the subject; and on Thursday evening I addressed a few friends on these words, 'I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.' We then committed ourselves into His gracious hands, and determined not to be separated from each other, but to go and try to do what we could for the

honour of God, and the benefit of our suffering fellow-creatures.

"Friday the 19th, we returned to town. The disease was going on with its ravages; but nothing particular happened among our friends until Wednesday the 24th, when Mrs. Dixon, one of our earliest friends, was attacked, and was soon thought to be dying. I went to see her, and took, as I thought, my last farewell—but she is now recovered.

"25*th*.—My dear little Joseph was seized with convulsions. These are alarming at all times, but were rendered peculiarly so at present. But this was not enough. God had more in reserve to exercise our faith and patience, and love and resignation. About midnight, Mr. Venning's steward sent us word that he was seized with cholera, and entreated us to come to him. We ran—and after consulting for a few minutes what should be done, I hastened for a doctor and found one, who administered immediate assistance and relief. By the prompt aid afforded to this man his life was preserved. Indeed, in almost every instance where *immediate* aid could not be procured,

the patient died. I remained up all night to watch, lest the malady might take any sudden change. This, together with the circumstances of my dear suffering child, greatly affected me. But I was not permitted to rest; for early on Friday (26th) a note came from Mrs. Chapman, the excellent mistress of our Lancasterian school, written with her own hand, saying that she was very ill. Our good friends Mr. Gellibrand and Mr. Mirrielees immediately went to her, and procured for her all possible assistance—but, alas! it was all of no avail. This was a dreadful day in St. Petersburg. Among the hundreds of people who were attacked with cholera, I never heard of one who recovered. A kind and excellent doctor came home at night and wept like a child—every one whom he had visited that day died under his hands. Dear Mrs. Chapman left a delightful testimony. She rejoiced in God her Saviour. On Saturday morning, at four, she expired. Dear Mrs. Gellibrand took her little orphan daughter to live with them. In the afternoon I performed the funeral service, and, together with the members of the school

committee, accompanied the body to the ground expressly appointed for persons who died of cholera. Here the scene was truly awful. Numerous coffins were resting, some on carts, and others on the ground, waiting till graves could be dug for them. We procured two men to dig a grave for our friend, and saw her committed to dust in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life. Little did I then think that her grave would soon be opened to receive one of my sweet boys—but so it came to pass.

"About ten in the evening I returned from the funeral, and found my wife unwell. This was Saturday night. My next business was to go in search of a doctor, and happily met with one at home. He ordered bathing, bleeding, &c. This kept me up all night. A dear Christian friend watched with us. It was a good preparation for the pulpit, as far as it respected the *subject*, but it exhausted my strength. Our morning service was thinly attended. Some were sick, others were watching, and others were afraid to venture out. My text was, 'Blessed is that servant whom

his Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching.' It was my last text; and I have often thought since that I should never preach again. Monday passed over pretty peacefully; but on Tuesday, the 30th, my little Joseph was seized with symptoms nearly resembling cholera; yet we fondly thought that children were exempt from the malady. The night came on, and the child grew worse. It was a night long to be remembered. It was spent in watching and prayer. The dear little fellow frequently said, 'I thirst;' and I believe he never repeated it but I thought of the Redeemer and His agonies, and drew comfort from His dying love. At four the following morning, when the child appeared to be dying, I called my wife into the adjoining room, where our other two boys were sleeping, and we kneeled down together, and once more gave up ourselves and our offspring to the Lord, committing in an especial manner the spirit of our Joseph into the Saviour's hands. Ah! dear fathers and mothers, who have been bereaved of your children, *you* will understand what were our feelings. And now, while we stood in silence

waiting to see the child expire, another wave was preparing to roll over us. A sound from another quarter pierced our hearts—'Johnny is seized!' This seemed like a sword in our bones. I hastened to a dear friend, Mr. Ropes, from America, who was now staying with us, and begged him to arise and help us. Two doctors came. My wife, and servants, and friends were employed in bathing, rubbing, blistering, &c., this lovely boy, while I was left to watch and weep over the other dying child. The cholera made dreadful havoc on John. He seemed death-seized, and amidst tears, and sighs, and groans, and efforts of no common kind, he sank into the arms of death before noon. So rapidly did death execute his commission! In the evening, our friends conveyed his body to the cholera burying-ground, and placed him in Mrs. Chapman's grave. 'Glory be to God! Glory be to God! Glory be to God!' were the only words which my wife and myself could utter, when we saw ourselves so suddenly bereaved; and I hope these will be the burden of our song through the ages of eternity.

"My heart sinks at the recital, but I must go on. At this moment, when we needed every assistance, our servant-man became alarmed, and requested his wages, that he might go to his family in the interior; and I was actually compelled to dismiss him when the undertaker was putting my darling John into his coffin. Thus wave after wave rolled in upon us, redoubling all our woe. But this was not all. As soon as the corpse was carried out of the house, my beloved wife, who had rallied all her strength to nurse her lovely children, immediately sank, and was confined to her bed for several succeeding days. I felt amazed and bewildered, and threw myself on my couch, to compose my troubled mind for a few minutes; but another wave was preparing. I had scarcely laid my head on my pillow, when a person came and aroused me with, 'Your kitchen-maid is attacked with cholera!' 'Is it possible?' said I. 'Is it possible?' I really trembled. There was no time for reflection. If I thought about anything at all at the present moment, it was this, 'Surely God is going to make a short work of it with us; but

we shall not be lost; for He is our God.' We ran to the kitchen, and found the woman suffering, and gave her powerful medicine. Two doctors were called in; and, I rejoice to add, she is now convalescent.

"My house was now in complete confusion and distress. One child dead—another in the agonies of death—my wife confined to her bed—and one servant also sick in bed.

"The next morning dear Mrs. Mirrielees took our eldest and now only child, to reside with them.

"On Saturday, about mid-day, our sweet little Joseph expired; and in the evening, our friends carried him to the grave, where he rests with his dear sister—our first-born. I was now unable to support myself any longer; both body and spirits were exhausted. I took to my bed also, and was much afraid of cholera, though the fear was checked at the commencement, and was not permitted to prey upon me. As my dear partner and myself lay bemoaning our afflicted state, and endeavouring to comfort each other with the consolations of the gospel, we looked around and rejoiced to see

our pious nurse Erena still spared to us. But, as if to complete the scene of our distress, about midnight this faithful servant was also seized. Now the house was turned into an hospital; and we were thrown into the hands of strangers.

"Thus, in the course of ten days, my happy, healthy family was shattered in pieces; and we are now attempting to repair the wreck against another storm. When *that* will come, God only knows.

"During this short sickness we have had seven doctors, as we were happy to call in the first we could meet with. Three silent Sabbaths have been our portion. This has grieved me, but we cannot resist the will of God. I believe that the best relief for a preacher with an *afflicted mind* is to preach; but the duty of a preacher with an *afflicted body* is to be quiet; for by attempting to preach when he is unable, he may injure his usefulness through all his future days. On this plan I have acted. We are now in the country, but I hope to be able to preach next Sunday.

"The scenes which I have attempted to

describe seldom fall to the lot of one man. In reviewing them, I tremble and rejoice. There is much in them to make me tremble, but I also behold many things to call for my loudest praises.

"1. I believe that, from the beginning of our distress until now, we have not uttered a rebellious word, nor cherished one murmuring thought. We have felt, and felt deeply; but we have been wonderfully supported, and strengthened, and comforted. The High and Holy One has not forsaken us—no, not for a moment; and we can recommend Him to all future sufferers as a very present help in time of need.

"2. None of our particular friends who live near us were afflicted, and they were incessant in their attentions, night and day. Had they or their families been sick, they could not have attended to us, and then we should not have known where to look for help.

"3. It was a great mercy that we could procure people to work for us in the room of our afflicted servants. If the people had taken the alarm, as we were afraid they would, then

no one would have come near us, and we should have perished alive. Oh, if the Lord had continued his strokes only a few days longer, we can easily perceive how deplorable our situation would have been!

"4. It was very consoling to us that two of our spiritual children—good Mrs. Mickleson, who sold her watch to buy Bibles for the Finns, and our pious nurse—were enabled to perform the last kind offices for our John and Joseph.

"5. Though we know of no other family who have been afflicted like ourselves, yet we do not view it as a mark of the Almighty's displeasure. Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and we bless Him for His fatherly chastisement. May it make us more than ever the partakers of His holiness! 'Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he pruneth it.' He has pruned off two boughs from us at a stroke, but our prayer is that it may render us more fruitful. It *became* the Moral Governor of the world to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings, and we hope and pray that our sufferings may be so sancti-

fied as to render us fitter instruments for bringing many sons unto glory. Pray for us, dear fathers and brethern! Pray that this may be the happy result of the Lord's dealings with us. Amen."

The Princess Metschersky expressed the solicitude and the trust of many hearts when, at the close of this storm, she wrote :—"Are you all *alive*, my dear friend, are you all *safe?* Yes, you are all safe under the mighty arm of our heavenly Father; but in this time of trial—in a moment when His chastening hand plunges every human feeling into dread and grief —in these sorrowful hours are your souls in *peace?*" And although Mr. Knill could not reply that he and all his loved ones were "alive," he could affirm that all were "safe" and "in peace." "Dear Madam," he asks of his now widowed friend, Mrs. Rooker, does not heaven appear more desirable since you had three children and a husband there? Although we wish to be there, chiefly because we shall be 'ever with the Lord,' I do not think our heavenly Father is angry with us for cherishing the anticipation of unmingled

bliss with beloved relatives. I believe I never thought so much of heaven as I have done since my Julia, and John, and Joseph were there, and in this way I think the dispensation has worked for my good."

As soon as his mind had attained to some degree of tranquillity, he drew up an interesting account of his son John,* which was published by the Religious Tract Society. The charming simplicity which pervades the little sketch led to its extensive circulation in the Russian, Mongolian, and other languages; and every testimony to its usefulness sent a fresh tide of gratitude through the father's heart.

Of his tracts generally, Mr. Knill afterwards wrote—"My first effort was one entitled, 'The Influence of Pious Women in promoting a Revival of Religion.' It found favour, and after being published by the Tract Society, was translated into my old language, the Tamil, and God blessed it at Travencore. I went on sending home papers, whenever circumstances occured which afforded good his-

* "An Account of John Knill: by his Father."

torical notices. Some were printed by the American and English societies, and others by private persons at their own expense, and they are now moving through the world in ten languages — the numbers printed already amounting to between six and seven millions. Oh, the wonder-working God! I stand amazed at the grace that taught my heart to love, my head to plan, my hands to work! It has frequently been my happy lot to meet with persons who have been awakened, directed, comforted, and I hope saved through these humble messengers. Mr. Jones, of the Tract Society, told me that they printed an edition of thirty thousand of the 'False Hope' for the London City Mission, because the representations of its usefulness compelled them. In the blessing of God on these tracts, I have noticed much of the Divine sovereignty. For instance, I wrote 'John Knill' to comfort bereaved parents; but God blessed it to the conversion of a man in Newgate under sentence of transportation. Lady Pirie took me to see him. Again, I wrote 'The Dying Thief and the Dying Saviour,' with a hope that it

would be blessed in our prisons; but two gentlemen of high moral character were converted by it, who have entertained me in their mansions, and given me the cheering acccount with their own lips. Should not every young minister be stirred up to write short pithy tracts, and hope for the Divine blessing on them?"

The return of the Rev. William Swan, with the early ships, cheered the little Christian circle in St. Petersburg, and gave Mr. Knill an opportunity of prosecuting visitations among the English sailors in Cronstadt, in which he had always delighted. "I have lived," he says, on 31st of August, "on board ship, and have not been up to the town at all. The congregations have been large, and deeply interesting; but the field is so vast—about one thousand English and American ships with about ten thousand men, annually—and demands so many kinds of labour, that my heart is almost full of it. . . . . I find the sailors in general very destitute of good books, and I am most desirous to supply a thousand men next summer, if I live, with a copy of such a work as

Baxter or Doddridge, which they may call their own, and take them as a chart and compass over the great ocean of life. I have ordered five hundred volumes, at my own expense, to be ready for next spring's ships."

These interesting and useful visits were necessarily terminated on the approach of winter; but the same agency which closes the seaward, facilitates the landward communications. When the snow mantle descends on the green cupolas, the bronze statues, and the gravelled promenades of the city, the rugged highways of the country become paved in a style which renders travelling a luxury. The passenger-steamer therefore, in which he had been made free by the generous owner to navigate the Neva all the summer, was now exchanged for the sledge; and the diligent Siberian missionary, being detained by the labour of copying a recently discovered version of the Scripture, Mr. Knill was enabled to visit periodically several neighbouring villages, in which English artisans were employed by the Russian government. In these excursions he took deep inter-

est, and his visits were always hailed with gratitude, though no lengthened memorials of them remain.*

The winter proved to be one of unusual sickness and mortality among the English residents in St. Petersburg, and Mr. Knill was called, in the midst of all his energetic labours, to follow several beloved friends to the grave, some of whom had been among his most intelligent and affectionate coadjutors in every good endeavour. After such a season of gloom and sickness, the genial airs of the spring were more than usually welcome. They brought with them, too, a new prospect and a new mode of life. In the month of May, he received from the directors of the London Missionary Society a request that he would visit England, and devote some time to the work of representing the society, and stirring up a missionary spirit through the country. In making this proposal the directors appear to have been prompted by a desire to afford to him some change after the sorrows and toils he had

* At Alexandroffsky, one of those villages, a church was formed, which now maintains an English pastor of its own.

undergone, as well as by a knowledge of his remarkable adaptation to the work to which they called him. He, at the same time, was the more inclined to accede to their request, as a desire which he had long cherished of having a chapel for the exclusive use of his congregation was now more than ever likely to be realized, and the time had come when application for pecuniary aid might be properly made in England. The hand of God thus seemed to him to be in the proposition. "Your letter," he writes to the Rev. William Ellis, on the 18th January, 1833, "overwhelmed me. I opened it in the street, and wept aloud when I read that part which referred to my return to Britain, and could not help saying, 'Lord, thou knowest I am not equal to this. It is too much. The directors have formed too high an opinion of me, and their hopes will be blasted.' Yet this will not prevent me doing what I can. I have had two or three meetings with my friends about it, and I shall leave for England as soon as possible."

CHAPTER X.

Widening Horizon.

"As ships meet at sea, a moment together, when words of greeting must be spoken, and then away upon the deep, so men meet in this world; and I think we should cross no man's path without hailing him, and, if he needs, giving him supplies."—BEECHER.

Mr. Knill fully expected that after a brief sojourn in England, he would be able to return with the means of completing a chapel, in which he should continue to hold forth the word of life in St. Petersburg. But his services among the churches in England proved so valuable, that he was induced by the directors, from time to time, to prolong his stay ; and having met with one well qualified to occupy his vacant place, he eventually perceived that he was to prosecute and to finish his labours for Christ in his nativecountry. The work on which he entered is one almost equally useful and perilous. To awaken the Christian mind of the country to the duty of disseminating the gospel over the earth, is to render, not only to the heathen, but to England, one of the highest services ; but to maintain a thoughtful and devout spirit during incessant journeys, in the

atmosphere of public meetings, and among successive crowds of strangers, cannot be easy, and is never really accomplished, but when the ruling motive is of unusual power. Mr. Knill entered on the task with a full knowledge of its peculiarities; and during the eight consecutive years which he pursued it, received in such measure the blessing of the Holy Spirit, as to make that period one of the most valuable of his life. Materials, however, for giving it full illustration do not exist. There was no such leisure for entries in journals, and no such necessity for epistolary correspondence as had existed in the quietude and remoteness of the Russian capital: the journals now containing little more than lists of engagements, and the letters being confined almost entirely to affectionate notes to his family and his more intimate friends.

The following communication from the Rev. Dr. Urwick of Dublin, opportunely supplies a characteristic general sketch.

"The first time I had the pleasure of seeing and hearing Mr. Knill was in the summer of 1820. I was not then resident in Dublin,

but came up to attend a public meeting for fully organizing the Hibernian Auxiliary to the London Missionary Society. A deputation from the parent society was present, consisting of the Rev. John Arundel, its Home Secretary; the Rev. Dr. Stewart of the Scotch Church, Liverpool; and the Rev. Richard Knill, who had just returned from India. Evangelism in our city was in the simplicity and susceptibility of its early youth. The arrival of such a deputation in behalf of missions to the heathen, produced no small stir among those who are called the Christian public; for to many of them the missionary enterprise was a new thing—to the claims of which they then awoke as from a sleep,—the rising of an orb they had not before seen. The admirable exhibition which the deputation presented of the catholic principle and practice of the society, added to the excitement. Especially was it extraordinary and interesting to have the sacred cause pleaded in Dublin, by a young man of good speaking powers, with a soul of fire, direct from the far-off mission field—who could largely and affectionately tell, from his own

knowledge, what abominable idolatries and other evils prevailed in heathendom, and what blessed results had already followed upon the introduction of the glorious gospel in the dark places of the earth!

"Sixteen years passed by, and Mr. Knill was again in Dublin. During the interval he had been fulfilling his ministry in Russia. He came alone, but the event proved 'he was a host in himself!' The first service in which he was engaged was on a Sabbath morning, in my own chapel. It was, throughout, one of great efficiency. His prayers, his reading of the Scriptures, with short comments as he proceeded, and his sermon, all conspired to gather up the hearts of the congregation into communion with his own.

"There was no pretence of greatness; there was no attempt at display; there was no elaborate composition; there was not what would entitle him to be placed high as a reasoner, or as an original thinker, or as an orator; but there was good sense, pure and rich gospel truth, living earnestness, a spirit glowing as if kindled from the altar of God,

and a directness which made the hearers feel that what he said was spoken in honest purpose of heart. Rarely had I heard a preacher who was more happy in illustration by anecdote, or who better combined and blended statements adapted to convert and edify, with those which bore for the consecration of talent and property to aid Christian missions. His style was simple; his sentences short; and every word seemed to be an outbreathing of his soul. His countenance was most expressive; whatever affected himself appeared to affect others; you might read his mind in his face; and the smile or the tear—the look that wins, or melts, or awes, came spontaneously with his ideas. He was tellingly graphic in description, and moving in appeal; and withal he had an unction of sterling piety which proved him to be truly a man of God. Those who attended his ministry in other places of worship in our city formed a like estimate of him.

"As Mr. Knill was unaccompanied by another delegate from the society, I went with him on a short tour to some places south

of Dublin, and on a round to the west, including Sligo. We had hospitality and God speed from excellent ministers and members of the Established Church, as well as from other friends. Two of our meetings were held in episcopal places of worship, according to arrangements made by the clergymen of the respective parishes. Wherever we went, we found hearts open to receive our friend's statements, and respond liberally to his appeals. I much enjoyed the opportunity which this joint-travelling gave me, for becoming more intimately acquainted with him; and the better I knew him, the more I loved him. I found him to be as real in private, as he appeared to be in public. His residence in India, and afterwards in Russia, had given him a good knowledge of the world. He could 'beware of men,' while he was free and lively in conversing with them. He maintained his position among them without aping what he was not. Nothing of what is justly called 'cant' ever escaped him; but he was never at a loss for pointed appropriate remarks, wisely and pleasantly made, to whomsoever he met. He had

great vivacity in conversation, with not a little wit and humour, and uniform good temper. When opportunity was given, he spent his time alone, partly in writing, partly in prayer, and partly also in resting and recruiting his not over-strong bodily frame. He had great power of observation and quickness in adapting incidents to illustrate cases. What struck me perhaps as yet more remarkable, was his faculty for repetition. Anecdotes and appeals which he had given out often in other places, he delivered in the same words and with the same warmth of spirit, tone of voice, and expression of countenance, as if he were then speaking them for the first time. This habit would with most men have been merely mechanical—an artistic acting to produce effect. I feel assured that in him the freshness and kindling which came on many occasions in the same form, were genuine, and were sustained by close communion with God, in and for His work.*

"I may add, that he was in the habit of

* Cornelius Winter thus explains the same peculiarity in Whitfield.

making a request, that the Christian friends with whom he was to be engaged, would occupy themselves beforehand in special, privately, and social prayer for the Divine blessing upon his visit. I need not observe how well this served to open and make ready the way for him, and to bring with him a presence and a power far higher than his own. Were the visits of missionary and other Christian deputations always preceded by the same devout preparations, they would be received with a more cordial welcome, and the advantage derived from them would be much grater than is realized in cases not a few."

The value which Mr. Knill placed on the prayers of the people whom he was about to visit, was in keeping with the importance which he attached to it in his own practice. "I think," said a friend to him, "I should feel the want of retirement in your present mode of life, more than anything." "So I do, my brother," he replied, "and particularly that I have so little time for prayer; I mean quiet prayer in the closet—without any noise, any hurry, any disturbance. This is what I want,

and what every minister of the gospel wants. What can we do without prayer? How can we study, how can we preach, how can we visit the sick, how can our words reach the heart, without prayer? A minister needs to be surrounded continually with a devotional atmosphere."

Of seasons of solemn retrospect and devotion, there occur many traces in the journal, such as these :—

"*May* 1, 1834.—I am now at Kibworth where the blessed Doddridge began his ministry. O my God, make me as holy, and preserve me as spotless—make me as zealous and devoted as thou madest him; and though I have not his learning, yet thou canst make me as useful! Lord, bless me, and make me a blessing! The last month has been very cheering. Ten thousand mercies have followed me — exposed by night and day — constantly preaching and living among strangers, yet preserved and well to this moment! O Lord, to thee I ascribe the praise forever, and to thee on this first day of the month, I afresh give up myself to be more than ever consecrated

to Thy service. If I am spared through this month, there will be many calls upon my feeble powers. Lord, help me safely through! Thy grace is sufficient for all Thy servants: help me to lay hold of it by faith. Amen."

The scenes of his own early life awakened a similar class of feelings in a very interesting manner.

"*September* 30, 1836.—Proceeded to Braunton my native place, and found my brother alive, but weak in body; and, I trust, improving in spiritual things. My soul was greatly comforted by his conversation, especially on the majesty and glory of the Saviour.

"At night I was accommodated with the same bed I had often occupied before. The furniture remains just the same as when I was a boy. But my busy thoughts would not let me sleep; I was thinking how God had led me through the journey of life. At last the light of morning streamed through the little window, and my eye caught a sight of the very spot where my sainted mother, more than forty years ago, took my hand, and said, 'Richard, my dear, kneel down with me, and I will go to

prayer.' I seemed to hear the tones of her voice: I recollected some of her expressions. I burst into tears, and rising from my bed, fell on my knees, just on the place where my mother kneeled, and adored the Divine goodness for giving me such a parent. Bless the Lord, O my soul, at every remembrance of this mercy!"

"*October* 2, *Lord's-day*.—Preached at Barnstaple. The scenes of youthful folly pressed sore upon me, and I was nearly overwhelmed. When reading the second of Ephesians, I could not proceed, but shut the book; when the congregation rose, and we prayed. I recovered, but it was a weeping day to myself and to hundreds."

"*October* 8.—Walked about among my old neighbours, and humbled myself before God at the recollection of youthful transgressions. I bless Thee for light and life, and peace and joy, through Christ Jesus, my Lord."

"*October* 9.—I dined at Bideford with dear Spencer, and preached to about a thousand old and young, in the old meeting, where I have enjoyed so much. Fine sight! Religion is

greatly on the increase here, and in every part of North Devon. The Lord be praised !"

Proceeding through the country in such a spirit as this, it will be readily understood that he aimed primarily at the increase of religion in the hearts of the people before him. "I like," he said, "the missionary sermon which brings the people to dwell on the love of Christ. It is not the brilliant oration which does the work at our missionary meetings, but the earnest and direct appeal to the conscience. 'How much owest thou to my Lord ?'—that is the question to bring home; and when it is brought home, the money will not be wanting." The predominance of this feeling gave him an almost intuitive perception of opportunities of usefulness. "Sir," said a workingman to him, "I went last night to the missionary meeting, and I heard you speak of the love of Christ, and of the responsibility of Christ's people to seek the salvation of the heathen. I have professed many years to be a Christian, but I have never yet given anything to the Christian cause. I have come now to say that, by good health and constant work, I have

saved up £10 ; and I have brought it, begging your acceptance of it, as my first contribution to the Missionary Society."

Mr. K. asked "Does your wife know of this?"

"No ; she is not a godly woman, and I am afraid to tell her," replied the man.

"Well, I will tell you what to do. I cannot take it without her knowledge. Go home; take courage and say to her, 'You are my nearest and dearest friend. I want you to kneel down with me and pray with me for five minutes, and then I want to ask your permission for something that I will not do without that permission.' Do not be afraid ; but go tenderly and affectionately to her. See what the result will be, and come again to-morrow."

The next morning the man came, and with tears said, "It is a most wonderful thing! My wife has always been opposed to these things. But I went home ; I had the courage to do what you told me : I asked her to kneel down with me. I then told her everything ; and she has sent me here to-day to say she gives it cordially, and with all her heart."

The following communication from Mr.

Charles Reed gives an additional proof that arduous as were the duties in connexion with the mission to which he was pledged, there was hardly a proposal for the good of the population around him with which he was not ready to comply :—

"Early in the year 1839, Mr. Knill visited Leeds. He was the guest of Mr. C——, an influential magistrate in that borough, and at his house we first met. I had resided through several years in the town, and was a member of the church under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Ely. During the winter of 1838, this excellent minister had been making an effort to promote the revival of religion among the people of his charge, and a great awakening had taken place in both the church and congregation. Drawing-room and kitchen meetings were held from house to house, at which persons of all classes were assembled—the Scriptures expounded, religious experience given, and free prayer united in. These were hallowed seasons. Breaking in upon the ordinary festivities of the winter, no opportunity seemed to be left for mere evening parties; for the

families were all concerned in higher and more important interests. Among the inquiring people, John Ely was like an apostle; and Winter Hamilton and Thomas Scales rejoiced in the proofs of usefulness by means of these holy and prevailing influences. Having at the time the charge of a large factory in the town, where many hundreds of young people were employed, I was led, amidst much discouragement, to attempt something for their religious welfare. Most of the families employed in Britannia Mills were Irish, and of these most were Romanists. No difficulty, however, had arisen in setting on foot a good library of books for circulation; and classes for instruction had been arranged. The great difficulty seemed to be, the connecting with the scheme a religious service, which it was desired, by some of the pious workmen, to hold at least once in the week. On a certain Wednesday evening, the experiment was to be made; and in the face of some open contempt, and much more apathy, we had issued the notice that the works would stop an hour earlier than usual on that evening.

"I believe it was in answer to prayer that, on the very night when this notice had been posted on the outer gates of the mill, and we were questioning the policy of the act, a stranger came into the town. Quite unexpectedly to me I met him at the house of our mutual friend; and, before he knew my name, or I was acquainted with his, my eye had met his searching and affectionate look, at the startling question, 'What are you doing for the Saviour?' I hesitated; and our host said, 'O, Mr. Knill, he is at work in a corner of the vineyard, which you must see.' From that moment he was my friend. He fell in my way at a time of sore trial; and he no sooner heard of our plans and difficulties, than he entered into them with the greatest interest. He offered to go with me to the houses of some of our people; and while he astonished them by the suddenness and pointedness of his questions, he won their respect by his kindness and essential goodness. Thus I remember that he went with me from cottage to cottage, and, standing by the looms, his wonderful tact broke through all the obstacles which had bar-

red my effort to be useful. The poor people were all delighted, and through the day the principal topic of conversation in the factory was the visit of the Russian missionary. On the morning of the day in question, a great event happened. Mr. Knill visited our works, and so great was his popularity, that people, not unused to stand by their machines while peers and nobles passed along, were with difficulty kept at their work while he visited the various departments. He was received in all the rooms with great manifestations of interest by the groups surrounding him ; and the strong men in the forge, the dye-house, and the engine-room, vied with the little children piecing the endless threads and soliciting the tracts, hundreds of which he distributed during his visit. With his own hand he wrote a notice, and posted it in the principal entrance —'Mr. Knill will give an account to-night of "A Yorkshireman's Funeral."' I shall never forget the scene. The great bell rang out at seven o'clock, the last beat of the throbbing engine was heard, the gates were thrown open, and the people were free to go or to remain.

In one room, of immense proportions, a platform was raised, and on that platform stood a home-made pulpit, fresh from the carpenter's shop. Rushing in like a mighty tide came the congregation. Pious Sunday-school girls led the way; old women, to whom the blessed Word had long been a strange story; little children, attracted by the novelty of the scene; and behind them all, a compact body of men. Catholics, and plenty of them—infidels, and not a few—men of every creed, and more, I fear, of none—mingled in that promiscuous throng. The magic power of love had won that congregation.

"The proprietors of the mill were punctual in their attendance; the cashier, the book-keepers, and clerks; the gate-keeper and the call-boys—all were present; indeed, I believe few were wanting when the whole company stood to sing that hymn of praise, 'Come, let us join our cheerful songs.' It was an impressive sight, even to Mr. Knill, accustomed as he was to popular gatherings. I watched his face, and saw that emotion was busy there. The tenderness of a loving spirit betrayed

itself in those large expressive eyes, and the words faltered on his lips—'Jesus is worthy to receive,' &c. All eyes were turned on him as, rejecting the pulpit, he stood against one of the columns to address that crowd of busy workers, in the life of daily toil and in their own workshop. I doubt not that exquisite narrative, since published, under the title of 'The Funeral of a Yorkshireman,' was first composed and delivered on this occasion. Aptly suited to the circumstances of the people, and having a local interest of so powerful a kind, his address was listened to with profound attention. I may not say what good resulted from this effort; but if sighs, sobs, and exclamations (quite unusual in that part of the country) are proofs of feeling, and that feeling was sincere, surely that night was one in which the angels of heaven rejoiced over the faithful proclamation of the heavenly message of peace and salvation. It was the beginning of a good work; a nail had been fastened in a sure place; a regular prayer-meeting was instituted, and several persons were received into fellowship among the Independents and Wesleyans.

"Some years after this Mr. Knill visited Leeds again, and he received this testimony that 'good hands worked better;' and that tract distribution and prayer-meetings 'did not hinder labour,' any more than psalm-singing at the loom reduced the amount of profit."

It must have been observed before now, but it merits particular attention, that, though favoured to a remarkable extent, with large and exciting audiences, Mr. Knill's zeal was not limited to them. He was as much moved by an individual as by a multitude, and seemed habitually impressed by the infinite worth of every human being. He therefore rarely permitted an opportunity of personal conversation on the highest topic to pass unimproved, and numerous were his entreaties to his friends to pursue this accessible, but too little frequented path to usefulness. It was evident that he had made the method of successfully approaching strangers on the question of personal religion a subject of constant study. That he occasionally made mistakes, no one was more ready to admit than himself. Some-

times a rapidity and directness of utterance, which were meant to throw off reserve, and which indeed most nearly accorded with his natural manner, made the timid shrink from further communication, and the proud resent the familiarity by studied silence ; but while the causes of such failures were carefully observed with a view to prevent their recurrence, in by far the greater number of instances, the sincerity, the benevolence, and the real deference which declared themselves in his transparent eye and simple manner, secured the confidence which he never misused. The instances are too numerous to admit of record, in which his words spoken in fitting circumstances, and at a critical moment, came with electric power on individual hearts. It is said, that as many as a hundred ministers, now preaching the gospel at home and abroad, trace their first purpose to give their souls to Christ, or their lives to the public service of his church, to his quickening appeals. From his frequent allusion, in conversation and in correspondence, to these results, some may have imagined him ostentatious; but no one

who properly understood the childlike openness of his disposition, or perceived the unaffected tone of devout praise in which such references were made, could retain that impression. So far from attributing his usefulness to any peculiar wisdom and excellence of his own, he was continually overcome by the Divine goodness which shone in it.

"This morning," he writes to an intimate friend, "I received from Mr. M—— the touching account of his dear son's death, and of God's love to me, in making my conversation blessed to him, while walking on the road. It affected me to tears—indeed to 'strong crying and tears;' for the dear youth is only one among many who have been led to Christ, not by preaching, but by a tender, pointed conversation. Three letters received within a few days from K——, so very useful; from S——, an excellent preacher; and now this from P——-, is a rare occurrence, in so short a time. I would encourage every one whom I know to speak to their friends *to the point*. God will bless it."

If his sanguine and charitable temperament

sometimes inclined him to judge too favourably of character, it never led him to expect great results without toil. Some labour without hope, and others hope without labour: he fell into neither of these errors, and when the prayerful spirit he maintained, and the incessant diligence with which he pursued his work are considered, no one who believes the Divine promises, can be surprised that his path was crowded with blessings. Such notices as the following frequently occur in his concise journal:

"*January* 14, 1839. *Tabernacle, Bristol.*—About fifty-five remained after service to converse with me about their souls. Many have called since at my house.

"18*th*.—Sermon on the influence of pious women. After service, about two hundred women remained to speak with me. Lord, follow it with ten thousand blessings!

"*March* 3.—Preached to seven thousand people in fifteen days, and had offers from six young men to go as missionaries.

"*April* 12.—On one day I received a letter saying that a sermon had been blessed to three

people in London, and heard that three had been awakened by the sermon at Chishell. Sent books to the young person at B——, who appeared to get good from the service there.

"*October* 15.—Mr. H—— called to tell me that God blessed my message to him at W——, and brought him to the Saviour. Now he is going with John Williams to the South Seas. What shall I render to the Lord for all those mercies!

"*December* 1, 1839.—The month of November has been a very instructive month to me. Mr. B—— told me of three persons being led to the Saviour during my visit. A minister from Turvey informed me that, when I attended the missionary meeting at P——, it pleased God to convert a poor, ignorant, careless woman, who has since been blessed to the conversion of her husband. When I was at Norwich, one of the deacons called and told me that a person had lately been admitted to the church, who was converted under a sermon I preached some years ago. Mr. Venning introduced a man to me who was converted dur-

ing a Christmas sermon at Bradenham Hall. Two ministers, both Wesleyans, came to declare to me that the Lord had been pleased to call them, through my sermons, the one to the work at home, and the other to the work abroad."

Such incidents were much more numerous than Mr. Knill was ever aware of. Very recently, a minister when preaching in Bideford, stated that when here visited that town after his return from Russia, he took aside himself and one of his companions, and having made them repeat the prayer, " O Lord, convert my soul, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Amen," until it was impressed on their memory, he charged them in the most solemn and affectionate manner to continue to offer it until it was answered. They did so ; and both are now ministers of extensive usefulness : one in the Wesleyan connexion, and the other in the established church.

During his residence at Wotton-under-Edge, he visited the Rev. James Spurgeon, the minister of an ancient chapel of Dr. Watts' at Stambourne, Essex ; and walking in the garden with his host's grandson, then about ten years

old, he felt, he afterwards said, a prayerful concern for the intelligent and inquiring boy, sat with him under a yew-tree, put his hands on his head, and prayed for him; telling him at the close, that he believed "*he would love Jesus Christ, and preach his gospel in the largest chapel in the world.*" When this curious prediction obtained something like fulfilment in the young preacher of the Surrey Music Hall, both parties, in a short correspondence, referred to the old garden incident with feelings akin to wonder. Who can trace the subtle influence of such suggestions on the tenor of one's life? All will at least be able to appropriate the aspiration prompted by these occurrences—"O Lord God omnipotent! Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. Help me as Thy servant to go on labouring and rejoicing. These are tokens of Thy favour too great to be left unrecorded. What would thousands of gold and silver be, compared to the conversion of souls, and the calling out of preachers?"

The year is thus gratefully and devoutly closed :—

"*December* 31.—In looking back on the past year, I find many things to call forth my praise. I have laboured in twenty-five English counties, made two trips to Ireland, and spent a month in Wales. My general health has been wonderfully preserved. My opportunities of usefulness have been very extensive, I having addressed four hundred congregations of different sizes, by which the Lord has given me the privilege of speaking to one hundred and fifty thousand persons about the salvation of their souls. This brings with it great responsibility. Lord, help me to feel it as one who must give an account! Pity and save Thy servant! Amen."

The toil, however, attending this service began to tell sensibly on Mr. Knill's health, and to point to the necessity of a change. "You recollect," he writes to a friend in Leeds, "that in my ordination service I declared that all my days should be spent as a missionary. This was my purpose, but I was compelled to surrender it from failure of health. Then, when I travelled for the Missionary Society, I thought I was just in my proper place, serving the

same cause; but my health again failed. Indeed, the work was too exciting and laborious for any man. I had eight years of it—Sabbaths and week-days—not like the agents of the Bible and Tract Societies, who generally rest on the Sabbath. In July, 1841, I was going through Gloucestershire for the mission, my health very feeble, nerves shaken by overwork, and a slight fever caught at Chatham. I preached in Rowland Hill's pulpit. A deep feeling pervaded the congregation, and two persons, in opposite conditions of life, a young lady and an old wicked soldier, were converted. The people pressed me to preach for a month, and at last to become their minister. I knew not what to do. I sighed for rest. I proceeded to London, and the directors giving their consent, I went to Wotton-under-Edge on the first of January, 1842."*

This place, which he had repeatedly visited and admired, was suited both to his state of

* The Rev. Rowland Hill, soon after 1771, built a "tabernacle," a range of alms-houses, and a summer residence in this place, and till the close of his life, in 1833, divided his labours between it and London.

health and to the peculiarities of his ministry. The rich scenery and rural quiet which it supplied, restored the tone of his mind, and the neighbourhood presented facilities for that union of the pastoral and missionary functions to which his tastes impelled him. The faithful labours of several of his predecessors had left impressions on the hearts of many in the congregation, which waited for the quickening influences of a spiritual spring-time. That period came with the vivacity and devout energy of his addresses in the pulpit, and the familiar and kind intercourse which he maintained with the people in their homes and by the way-sides. There was an almost general revival of religious feeling among Christians; and numbers who had been dead in trespasses and sins were "added to the Lord."

The heart of the system being animated, the warmth was quickly transmitted to the extremities. All converts were urged to bear some part in their Master's work; and he was able, in 1846, to say to a friend, "Eight of our members were at work on Sunday last in six parishes, and preached to about seven hun-

dred precious souls. We have five Sunday-schools in the villages, which call for much care and labour. Our Tabernacle Sunday-school is large, and God continues to smile upon the labours of our self-denying teachers." Among the sixty assistants at prayer-meetings, and the twelve village preachers, whose services he directed, there were, it was acknowledged, a great variety of gifts; but considering that, "in the absence of gaslight, a glimmering lamp is better than total darkness," he encouraged their endeavours, and did what he could to cultivate their powers. He says of the British schools, which had been improved, and accommodated with a spacious school-house, through his exertions:—"They are likely to be a great help to us. Some of our pious youth have had few opportunities of reading, or writing, or speaking correctly; but several, who have become concerned about their souls, are now attending an evening-school. This comes nobly to our help; and I hope to live to see the day when not one of our young men who engage in public services shall offend the ear of a good grammarian." All these

villages he visited personally at short intervals. At two of them—Hawkesbury and Charfield—he procured the erection of suitable chapels, and the services, for a season, of students from the Western Academy; while the converts were either formed into small local churches, or united to the society at the Tabernacle, which, during the period of his residence, was doubled in numbers.

It was Mr. Knill's settled conviction that his ministry was specially adapted to the awakening and gathering in of sinners; and when he thought he saw that object, to any marked degree, accomplished in one place, he became eager to pass to "regions beyond." On approaching the close of the sixth year of his work at Wotton, a variety of considerations conspired to impress him with the belief that it ought to be left to the careful cultivation of a new labourer, and he began to look around for another spot to which his peculiar gifts might be advantageously applied. During several visits, in the cause of missions, to Chester, the claims of that city appeared to him singularly great, and, under the advice of

several ministers of sound experience, he acceded to the unanimous invitation of the church in Queen Street to become their pastor. With profound sorrow his flock at Wotton heard from his own lips, at the last communion season of the year, that he had resolved to leave them. The sensitiveness of his heart prevented him allowing a long interval to elapse between the announcement of this purpose and its consummation. The four weeks of affectionate leave-taking which followed was as much as he could endure; and on the last day of the year, bearing costly tokens of love, he left a home in one of the loveliest vales in England for another within the old walls of Chester.

CHAPTER XI.

Sunset.

"Faith, perseverance, zeal,
Language of light and power;
Love, prompt to act and quick to feel,
Marked thee till life's last hour."

MONTGOMERY.

SUNSET.

THE church of which Mr. Knill now assumed the charge represented the families which had enjoyed the ministry of Matthew Henry, and which, when his successors fell into Unitarianism, retired and formed a separate community. At this period it was dispirited by heavy financial burdens, and was slow to believe that prosperity, either temporal or spiritual, was at hand. The hope and energy, however, of the new pastor quickly diffused themselves. Immediately on his settlement he addressed himself to the task of becoming acquainted with the people individually, at their own homes, and establishing between them and himself, as far as possible, sympathy and unity of purpose. He then showed them that what he had in view could not be accomplished if their efforts were limited to those who already attended the chapel, but that they must conjointly go

forth to the desolate wastes around them. He very soon proved that he had no intention of sparing himself in this enterprise ; for, in addition to the exhausting labours of visitation, he opened places in the neglected parts of the city and its suburbs, for preaching. Boughton, Handbridge, and King Charles' Chapel, as he called the spacious hall of an old mansion in which the first monarch of that name is said to have lodged before the battle of Rowton Moor, became new centres of light and power, and many persons who had resigned themselves to a total neglect of religious ordinances were awakened and introduced to the Christian course which they still pursue. This activity told powerfully on the members of the church themselves, whom he was most anxious to make "fit company" for the new converts. "No man," he said, "likes to go into an ice-cellar—it is too cold ; few people like to be in a room with dead bodies—there is death ; and a sleepy, lukewarm church has something in it so repelling that I wonder how any one can remain in it. Let the members of this church shine forth in all the splendour of holy living,

and the influences of it on others will be astonishing. Look on them : their heads planning for good—their hands working for God—their tongues crying, 'Behold the Lamb!' Is there nothing in all this to attract an inquiring youth?—nothing to catch the sympathies of a sinner just brought out of darkness into marvellous light?"

As this work was beginning to expand, it pleased God to draw the chief instrument in it nearer to Himself by successive trials. Scarcely had he recovered from several weeks of extreme prostration, produced by having been called to give evidence in a court of justice, on a trial which he had in vain laboured to prevent, when his home became the scene of sickness and mourning. An interesting young person, the orphan daughter of his nephew, who had been adopted into his family, and brought up with an affection which she cordially returned, was seized with fatal illness in her eighteenth year. About the same time, Samuel, his only remaining son, was laid low. When at school in Totteridge, this youth was attracted to Christ, and became anxious to

devote himself to the ministry of the gospel. He indicated, in many ways, an aptitude for such duties, and was eventually received into the Lancashire Independent College; but had not long pursued his studies, before his state of health compelled him to desist. After remaining a short while at home, in great weakness, he was induced to accept the invitation of a friend to visit America. His journeys, however, in the far-west of that continent proved exhausting, and at the close he was "just well enough to get home." He spoke with much gratitude of the kindness he received in many places for his father's sake. When sailing, for example, on one of the great lakes, sad and disconsolate, a passenger presented to him the tract called "The Russian Nurse," with the request that he would peruse it. He thanked the stranger, and added—"This woman nursed *me*." The communications which followed, led to acts of the most considerate kindness, of which, at that time, he stood particularly in need. On his return to England, his health so much revived as to permit him to address occasionally the smaller

meetings in Chester, and at length to take charge of a congregation at Sutton, not far from the city. A church consisting at first of twelve members was formed under his ministry; and having taken lodgings in the village, he was in the habit of proceeding thither on the Saturday evening, and returning on Monday, going back on Wednesday, and returning on Thursday—thus spending about four days every week among his little flock. The congregations became crowded and most attentive; Bible-classes and Sunday-schools were established, and sinners were converted. But his strength was soon spent, and his visits were frequently intermitted. After a long period of silence, he expressed an intense desire to be present at the first missionary meeting, and his father, anxious to gratify such a wish, took him over with great care. It was his last visit. A few affectionate words, which were all he could utter, closed his short ministry; and he returned home to complete the last stage of his heavenward journey under parental care.

"Dear Sam," his father writes to the Rev.

W. Swan, on September 26, 1849, "is kept in a very tranquil state, but I hear him coughing now. My dear wife is able to attend to him night and day, and he wants all a mother's love. Polly, a great-niece of mine, whom we took to train for God, is also dying; she, I trust, is safe in the arms of Jesus. It is very soothing, in the midst of our anxiety, to have good ground to hope that they have committed their precious souls to Jesus." To his old friend, the Rev. J. Lewis, he unburdens his heart thus on 21st December, 1849:—"I have often written you, but never under such painful feelings as at present. Dear Samuel, the object of our hopes, and prayers, and joys, and the source of many anxieties also, has left his weeping parents in the wilderness. Yesterday morning his spirit left the poor, worn-out and enfeebled body, and I believe Jesus received him into glory. He died with that precious name upon his tongue. Our judgment approves, and faith sees him in heaven; but nature feels. My beloved wife is much overcome. She has nursed him night and day for a twelvemonth, and scarcely ever left him for

half an hour, and, though wonderfully strengthened while Samuel lived, she is crushed beneath a weight of sorrow—not for him, but for herself, and Mary, and me."

"The dear Devonshire girl, whom we brought up with our daughter," he mentions in a note to Sir John B. Williams, a few days later, "died on the 26th of October, while my son was dying in a room below. But we were comforted in her death, and had a rich reward for love to an orphan. We felt greatly comforted by your few words of sympathy. There are times when even a smile or a tear will produce rapture, and surely, next to the favour of God, we ought to esteem the kind feelings of God's servants."

These private sorrows fed the lamp of his zeal; and his religious services in the city became most abundant. Though he attached the highest importance to the teaching of the pulpit, he considered that he had a special calling in the homes of his people. In the course of a few months, he knew more of the streets and antique lanes of Chester than many who had dwelt among them during long lives. He

seldom found any difficulty in reaching the hearts of the rudest of their inmates; but, dispensing with all introduction, he generally succeeded, both in suggesting his object, and in placing himself on a friendly footing, by the first sentence. "John," he would say, *guessing* at the name, when he did not know it, "what, think you, crossed my mind as I knocked at your door?" "Cannot tell, sir." "The people who live here," thought I, "have immortal souls: I wonder whether they are saved and happy." "Pray sit down, sir," would follow; and the conversation, though short, would generally end in a deep impression.

His great kindness to the poor could not remain hid; and it often exhibited itself in a form so artless and cordial, as to give to it a singular charm. If he saw a labourer, of whom he knew nothing, eating dry bread for his noonday meal, he would stop and say, "What! only bread!" and, inviting him to follow to the nearest shop, would send him back with a ration of cheese. Hearing, in the course of a walk, that a pious widow was in great want, he went to a shop and ordered

food to be sent to her instantly ; and entering the house some time after, he found her with the tears rolling down her cheeks, in the midst of her dancing children, giving thanks to God for an unknown benefactor. Such a sight was to him the richest gratification.

So much importance did he attach to the use of this remarkable talent for personal communication, that he often went to chapel half an hour before the time, that he might converse with the people, and, by a few well-directed remarks, prepare them for the service. When his labours in different parts of the city had sent to his congregations at Queen Street persons unaccustomed to the house of God, he was most anxious, by such kind attentions, to make them feel at home. Occasionally, however, the force of his thrusts would alarm them. To a man who had been induced to come to the Thursday evening lecture, he exclaimed, as he came up to him, "How much better to be here than in the public-house, singing 'Rule Brittania!'" "Now," said the man afterwards, "that was the very song for which I was famous ; and as I thought he must know

all about me, I staid away for some time; but I afterwards found he was always throwing such great paving-stones as were sure to hit some one."

There was no class of persons, indeed, whom he feared to encounter, or despaired of blessing. When about, one day, to enter a carriage at the Chester Railway Station, he observed some officers putting a band of chained prisoners into an apartment of an inferior carriage by themselves. He was immediately touched with compassion, and begged to be allowed to accompany them. The officers seemed surprised at his desire, but made no objection. He spoke to them with such power, that most of them were in tears; and before he left, he knelt down at their request, and offered up fervent prayers for their reconciliation both to man and God.

In the course of his ministry, great importance was attached to family religion; and it was observed that family prayer became much more carefully observed among Christians, and greatly extended among the poor. It delighted him to learn that a poor man's house had

become "sanctified by the Word of God and by prayer;" and sometimes, after a late walk about the city, he would come home filled with joy by the sounds of sacred song which he had overheard. On one occasion, when passing near a place in which there had been much wickedness, his ear was thus greeted; and, without disturbing the humble worshippers, he wrote with the point of his walking-stick on the smoky ceiling of the passage, "Salvation is come to Parry's Entry." The inscription continued on the memories of many long after it had vanished from the roof, and salvation itself still remains among the inhabitants.

The church had now been so much revived, that it was thought desirable to make an attempt to throw off at least part of the load of debt which depressed its energies, and abridged its ability to aid in the evangelization of the world. Nothing now seemed impossible; and the effort which followed, both then and at a later period, tended to call out the activity and to unite the hearts of the people. There were few who did not taste the enjoyment of self-denial in a good cause. Families

in very humble circumstance worked at the needle during the evenings of a whole winter, and poor men gave themselves to various kinds of industry in addition to their necessary toil, that they might have some share in the enterprise.

Mr. Knill, in the meanwhile, went over the wide range of his correspondents in all parts of the earth, and in few instances failed to receive a cordial response. Some incidents of that correspondence greatly interested him. One of them he alludes to in a letter to Dr. and Mrs. Henderson, dated 22d December, 1851 :—"Before the year ends, I feel anxious to send you a line, to express our hopes and prayers for your health, and peace, and joy. We have a full covenant, great and precious promises, a faithful and unchanging God. I hope you feel Him very near to your souls. I preached yesterday from 'They feared when they entered into the cloud;' and so, I suppose, we all have at times, though Christ was there. Thirty-five years ago, I had a Bible-class in Mr. Loveless' boarding-school. One of my favourite boys is now a merchant in

Madras; but most of the others are dead, or in other parts of the world. In August last I wrote to this gentleman, and told him of Chester, and of our efforts to remove the debt. This month I have received a very affectionate letter from him, with £25; and he adds, 'When I gave your salutations to the church, a member stated that he knew you; heard you preach at Shrewsbury, in November, 1840, from Galations i. 15, 16; and that that sermon led him to become a servant of God.' He sent £10. This is the first notice I ever heard of the young man, and I assure you it cheered me exceedingly. I hardly slept that night. I hope you will both meet with precious souls in heaven, helped thither by your pens or by your lips. We ought to anticipate great things, for God's Word will not return unto Him void."

This work had scarcely been brought to a successful termination, before an undertaking more unusual, and much more congenial, presented itself to his mind. His missionary longings always predominant, he was in constant dread of settling down into the minister

of a select congregation, to which the gospel had been long familiar; and although he had succeeded in crowding a spacious edifice with persons of whom a large proportion had been induced to attend public worship through his labours, he began to sigh for opportunities of preaching to multitudes among whom Jesus Christ had not been so much as named. Some might have imagined that, in a city of moderate population, largely supplied with clergy of the national church and non-conformist divines, such persons could not be found. He, however, did not entertain that impression, but believed that thousands were perishing within sound of the cathedral chimes, entertaining objections to entering within the walls of any sacred place so strong that nothing but unusual measures could overcome them. Meeting a pious working-man in the street one day, he said, in his usual non-prefatory style, "I am just going to order gas for the theatre."

"Are you then, sir, going to leave the chapel for repairs?"

"Oh, no; I am going to preach there for twenty Sabbaths."

"What, sir, in the play-house?"

"Yes; the people will go to a play-house when they won't go to chapels; and they must hear the gospel."

Such was his resolution, and such his reason. An old building, not far from the cathedral, which had formerly been a chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas, but had long been used as a theatre, was about to pass from the hands of the lessee to those of the "Chapter," to be rebuilt for purposes more consonant with the improved tastes of the day. Mr. Knill, having ascertained that he might, for a moderate sum, obtain the use of this building on Sundays for the remainder of the lease, determined on securing it. He had not so many precedents for the use of secular buildings in preaching to the masses as he would have had a year or two later, and yet it was not to be the first time he proclaimed the gospel in a theatre. On February 7, 1836, he wrote in his journal :—

"In the evening, preached at the theatre, Milton Street, formerly called Grub Street. The scene was novel and very affecting. Pit full; boxes full; gallery full, chiefly with

rude children, affording good materials for future labourers. Lord, bless the efforts of Thy people to illuminate and sanctify hearts in that neighbourhood!"

This incident, however, he had probably forgotten, as he does not appear to have mentioned it to any of his friends, with a view to remove their apprehensions of failure. He had himself no fears, but proceeded, nevertheless, with his usual good sense, to have every proper arrangement made under his own eye. He earnestly requested his stated congregation not to follow him; but he accepted the convoy of his deacons, and the aid of the choir, for which he had taken the precaution to procure a good harmonium.

The first service was announced by placards for the afternoon of Sunday, 21st November, 1852. The weather proved most unfavourable, and the streets were deluged with rain. Few persons were observed on the way, and, as he approached the place, he found some coming slowly away, as if they had concluded that nothing was to be done. "Won't you return?" he said. "There is no more room," was the

answer. Such was the fact. The sight was overpowering to the speaker, and the whole service produced a deep impression on the auditory. This was repeated from week to week. "Last Sunday," he writes, "was my fourth service. The place was densely crowded. We do not print any bills now, but I give a verbal announcement to fifteen or eighteen hundred. I cannot describe the congregation. The theatrical appearance, the crowd, the profound attention, the oft-falling tear, are all very cheering. Two hopeful conversions, some brought to decision, and pleasing appearances in more, are good indications of Divine approval. God is evidently moving among us. I know only a few faces, and that was my hope and prayer. The expenses will amount to about £60, and all the money is safe, either in the Chester Bank, or in the Bank of Faith."

It was one of the numerous proofs of the cordial feeling which existed between Mr. Knill and other Christian ministers, that one of the clergymen of the city, who several times attended these services, and took the

deepest interest in them, entreated the privilege of paying the cost of the gas, observing that, if he could not supply the heavenly, it might be permitted to him to contribute the earthly, light.

During the whole of the time occupied by this special work, Mr. Knill was by no means well. The gout affected him so much that he could not preach in a standing position, but had to rest on his knees. "It seems rather remarkable," he says, "but doubtless God has good reasons for it, that I am kept to the house, except on Sundays and week-evening services. It crossed me at first; but it must be well." It certainly did not diminish the power of his ministry. His words as arrows, pierced the consciences of some of the most hardened sinners. In the upper galleries, where no eye could light upon them but that of God, numbers of these outcasts from all the ordinary means of religious instruction congregated, and were arrested. "I was a blasphemer," writes one, "and cared neither for God nor man; I got into the darkest corner of the place to make game with my com-

rades; but when the sermon began, it drew such a picture of my life that I thought some one had been telling him all about me. During this discourse the terror of the Lord was on my soul; and when it was ended I went home, but found the truth of the words, 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked;' until at length 'old things passed away, and all things became new.'" No time was occupied in these sermons with humorous introductions or general dissertations on morals, but the fortress of the enemy was at once assaulted by vivid exhibitions of the word of life; and numbers of persons, not only convinced of the propriety of reformation, but actually reformed through "the faith of Christ" and the "renewing of the Holy Ghost," were united to the church in Queen Street, and to various other churches in the city.

This effort increased his pastoral work, for some time, to an extent which might have seemed sufficient for his declining physical energies. But what he had said of the great-hearted tutor at Gosport was true of himself

—"so long as there was a spot of fallow ground in the county, he could take no rest." In the summer of 1855 he formed a project, which, though never fully accomplished, showed the unabated freshness of his spirit. He entered into a correspondence with his brethren in the chief towns of Cheshire, proposing to visit them, and preach in their public rooms, streets, and market-places; remaining a day or two in each locality, with the view of entering into conversation, holding private conferences, and distributing religious tracts.

The proposition was cordially accepted; arrangements were made for the tour, and in the first week of July, having procured about 13,000 tracts, he sorted, packed, and sent them off to the several towns, with the fearless hope and almost boyish delight with which he went forth to the evangelization of the North Devon militia. He followed his printed messengers, and preached every evening from Monday to Saturday. On the Sunday he preached three times in Congleton, with great animation; closing his services there with a discourse in the market-place, on Monday evening, to a

very large audience. On the following morning he returned home, to prepare for another and similar journey. He appeared in excellent health and spirits, and spoke most gratefully of the attention with which his message had been received. In a little while he retired to his study ; but soon afterwards called for Mrs. Knill, who was instantly at his side. A blood-vessel had broken, and the blood flowed profusely from his nostrils. It was a moment of anguish and alarm ; introducing those months of prostration and waning power which formed the last scene of his active life.

Through the blessing of God on the assiduous attention which was paid to him, he was considerably revived before the autumn ; and on the 15th October, 1855, he was able to write this comforting letter to an old friend :

"DEAR MR. VENNING,—Our adorable Saviour 'pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe His holy gospel.' Cheer up, then, dear friend. May your evidences shine brighter and brighter, till the sun sets in glory ! The tabernacle, you feel, is feeble ; but a 'house not made with hands'

will follow. I bless God for the hope that I shall soon be 'with the Lord.' I have much to endear life. I love my family; I love my church; I love dear friends—but I could joyfully part with all to be for ever with Him. Pray for me, that I may be kept in this heavenly frame. Death has but one sting, and that has been taken out by Jesus Christ our Lord. Hallelujah."

Similar language he repeats in a beautiful note, written about the same time. Who would not desire to close life with equal serenity?

"My agony at Liverpool, for some hours, was greater than I recollect to have ever endured before: but I was very happy and willing, if the Lord pleased, to depart and to be with Him. It has been a blessed world to me, and a blessed church to me. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord has promised. I have as much happiness in my family, and with my friends, as could be expected by mortals; but I feel perfectly assured that the blessedness of heaven is exceedingly abundant, above all that we have thought or

seen. I thank you for all your friendship and affection."

The early months of 1856 were cold and harsh, and he was much confined to the house; but whenever the weather was at all favourable, he would go out, and be often absent for hours. He walked slowly and feebly, but sometimes accomplished the entire circuit of the promenade on the city walls; diverging occasionally to the houses of the sick or poor, where he was only able, after sitting thoughtfully for a few moments, to rise and take his leave, saying touchingly, "The Lord be with you," or "Peace be to you." The children of his flock he never passed without speaking to them, laying his hands on their heads, and returning their bright smiles. These transient ministeries, indeed, were often more fruitful than elaborate exhortations. "It seemed to me," said one, "that he never finished preaching; a word or two when meeting him on the street were as good as a sermon."

It was interesting to notice how those sympathies, which had never been withheld from any class, began to flow with increasing ful-

ness towards the aged, as his own infirmities multiplied. In one of the few notes which he was now able to pen, he writes to Mr. Venning, on the 4th December, 1856 :

"It is a long time since I wrote to you, and I am very anxious to hear how you are. I have ventured out to-day for the first time this month, but the frost and snow are too severe for my poor body. How are you, dear friend? Can you bear the cold, or are you also shut up? You are a long distance before me in point of age, but not in feebleness. I endeavor to live in the expectation, that it will soon terminate in glory. 'Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

A troop of old men, appointed by the city authorities to sweep the street in which he lived, frequently attracted his attention as he came down to breakfast; and fancying them to be cold and feeble, he would have all the coffee poured into bowls, and preparing it to his own taste, would carry it out to them with a few cheering words. The worthy "pensioners," especially on the colder mornings, extend-

ed their line so as to reach the pastor's house at the breakfast hour; not, it may be presumed, merely for the seasonable fare, but from a real interest in their benefactor; for after he was no longer able to make his appearance, the advanced posts inquired respectfully after his health, and the word passed with great interest from one to another through the whole body.

At the end of May, rooms were taken by the family in a farm-house a few miles from Chester, where the pure air and the rural scenery greatly delighted him. "The church in the village," says his daughter, "had no regular minister, and various clergymen preached—none too well. There was a discussion among us whether it was incumbent upon him to go to the service. 'Yes,' he said at last, 'I'll go; it will be long and fatiguing for me, no doubt, and I may not hear the gospel after all; but the only testimony I can give for Christ in this dark village, is to keep His day and attend His house; therefore I'll go.' In July the weather turned suddenly cold and wet, and we returned to town, which,

after seven weeks' absence, he was very glad to do. 'There's no place like home,' was frequently his pleased remark, as he went from room to room, and looked at the familiar furniture. On Sabbath, when able to attend the services, he would be waiting with coat and hat on for the opening of the chapel-doors. Having stepped across and entered, he would walk up and down the aisles, in front of the communion-rails; now stopping as if in meditation; now holding open the seat-door for some members of the congregation, and asking, as they entered, about their bodily or spiritual health; and now going up into the pulpit, from which he was never to preach again, and looking around on the gradually filling pews."

Before this time the church had accepted his resignation of the pastoral office, and, by the liberality of his numerous friends, a sum was raised sufficient to secure to him and to his family a proper maintenance for the remainder of their lives. The provision thus affectionately made greatly comforted him; and though he knew he could enjoy his portion of it but for a little while (only, as it proved, for one

half-year), it gladdened his heart to know that the capital would fall into the funds of the Missionary Society, which he had loved so long, for the relief of widows and orphans bereaved in its service.

"The progress of decline," continues the account "became more and more marked. The walks grew shorter and fewer. Days of prostration of body and mind were more frequent; with later rising and earlier retiring, but not to rest. In September he performed his last pastoral act, in the baptism of the child of one of the families of his church, but the hesitating speech, the repetition of sentences, and the evident forgetfulness, proved that his days of services were over.

"In November another small blood-vessel gave way, and we were alarmed by a fresh flow of blood from the nose. 'Only another tent-pin loosened,' he said; 'the old tabernacle is coming down.' The rest of that month and all December were one scene of suffering. Often he would go quietly away into the study when in great pain, lest we should be distressed; and sometimes we used to try to look as

if we did not notice it, that he might have the gratification of thinking he had spared us sorrow. The last month of his life he spent entirely in the house, even his little walks at noon, on the pavement before the door, being now too great an exertion. 'I cannot sing,' he frequently said ; 'sing for me.'

"'What would you like, papa ?'

"'Guide me.' And so I would go to the piano and sing, to 'Rousseau's Dream,' his favourite hymn,

'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah.'

He would always try to join in the last verse,

'When I tread the verge of Jordan.'

And when he could do that no more, he never missed the last two lines—

'Songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee!'

"'It is weary work travelling down the valley,' he remarked, on one of his last days. 'Yes ; but Jesus is with you.' 'I believe He is,' he answered, thoughtfully ; and then, in subdued tone, 'I will fear no evil.' From his

chamber * he could hear the singing in the chapel, and followed the service closely. 'Now they are singing—now they are at prayer; there, that is the second hymn—now the sermon is beginning; Lord, bless my dear people!'" So wakeful was his ear known to be to the sound of music, that the congregation omitted singing in the service which preceded his death; a circumstance which at once evinced their kindness, and gave a touching solemnity to their worship.

In the settlement of the Rev. Charles Chapman, A.M., his successor, he took the most lively and affectionate interest. On the Sabbath before his death he expressed a wish to see him; and after speaking to him for a few moments, and commending his church and family to his care and kindness, he grasped his hand earnestly, and said, "Be faithful, be faithful; I hope the chapel will be as full as it can hold; and God bless you."

At the commencement of his illness, he was tried by great depression of spirits, chiefly

* The house was No. 28 Queen Street, opposite the chapel.

arising from physical causes; but now that was over, and peace, and love, and joy were with him to the end. "My dear," he exclaimed to Mrs. Knill, on the day before his death, "I believe my Saviour will say to me, 'Well done.'" Even in the wanderings of delirium, this joy of his soul shone forth. "They sent me to preach unto the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ; and I did it!—I did it!" At length all power of speech left him, and he lay apparently unconscious all New-year's-day. He had heard and noticed the firing of the guns, and the bells which rung the old year out and the new year in; and then gradually became quiet again, in the early morning, looking his thanks for any attention shown him, and whispering, "Kiss me—kiss me," to the loved ones who were beside his bed. Within a few hours before his death, observing that his head was in an uncomfortable position, and that he was striving ineffectually to move it, his daughter sought to relieve him, saying as she did so to her mother, "Is not that better?" The dying father evidently heard her, and mistook the words for an in-

quiry if *he* were not better, and immediately said, though with great difficulty, "How are *you*, Mary?" love seeking, in death, to evade an answer that would give pain to his child. These were his last words. A little after, as the night was departing, he seemed to look round, as though in search of some one; and seeing this, his wife drew closer to him and took his hand; and his daughter laid her hand upon his burning brow. Still he appeared to gaze inquiringly, as if unconscious of their presence, until the latter whispered, "We are both here, dearest father, and Jesus is here, which is far better." Instantly a faint smile answered her words—a look of heavenly gladness, and peace, and rest—and then his eyes gently closed in the sweet "sleep which He giveth to His beloved." At six o'clock in the morning of the 2d January, 1857, he was "absent from the body and present with the Lord."

On the 8th, the remains were borne through the solemn streets—the shops having been voluntarily closed all along the route—followed by a deeply affected multitude, and by

ministers of every branch of the Church of Christ; the good Bishop of the diocese, who joined the throng at the grave, interpreting the general feeling by the remark, that there was "comfort in taking the last look of a good man." The treasure was deposited in the beautiful cemetery on the left bank of the Dee; where an appropriate monument, in addition to a mural tablet in the chapel, has since been erected by his attached friends.

Even if the Editor had not regarded his office as strictly historical, and endeavoured so to dispose the materials at his command as to enable the reader to form his own judgment of the individual to whom they relate, any attempt to sum up his excellencies and imperfections would have been rendered unnecessary by the contribution from another pen, with which, happily the volume closes. The curiosity, however, which naturally arises regarding the external appearance of those in whom we are interested, may demand a few additional words.

The prefixed portrait, which is taken from a

painting executed by an artist in the congregation at Chester, very fairly represents Mr. Knill in his latter years. His height was about six feet, and his form well proportioned. The complexion was fair, and the forehead rather high than broad: what are understood as the moral organs finely arching the head, upon which rather a scanty supply of soft auburn hair was gathered. The mouth was small, and the lips so regularly formed as to convey the idea of juvenile simplicity. The eyes were blue and full-orbed, having a thoughtful more than a sprightly expression: the lids being often allowed to drop as a curtain over them, not only as he sat in the pulpit and on the platform, but in the intervals of conversation, as if he sought retirement. His voice was very powerful and melodious, and went easily to the furthest limits of an assembly. It was used without apparent art, and seemed to follow the mental impulse. From the loudest pitch he descended, without harsh abruptness, to the quiet, confidential tone of conversation, in which, generally, he introduced his anecdotes. It was this melody and

variety of intonation, united with his open and manly bearing, almost as much as the contagion of his emotions, which led to results which one of the best judges of public speaking has acknowledged. "I never saw a man," says the Rev. Dr. Raffles, in the discourse preached in Queen Street Chapel on the Sunday after the funeral, "who had greater mastery over the assemblies of his fellow-men than he; and this was the secret,—it was no studied eloquence, it was no elaborate argument, it was no oratorical flash that did it,—it was the depth of earnestness, that figured in the eye and found an utterance and expression in the voice. That was it which aroused and riveted his hearers, so that they hung upon his lips and were carried onward by him, almost unconsciously, as with a current they made no offer to resist. How often have I seen him rise in the midst of a meeting that had become all but frozen by previous speeches, when, with one or two sentences, the whole had dissolved in a gush of intense feeling and the joyous expression of satisfaction and delight!

. . . "Dearly beloved departed friend! very pleasant hast thou been to me: I cherish thy memory with admiration and love!

'Thy chequer'd path in life is trod,
Earth changed for glory and for God.' "

CHAPTER XII.

Review.

BY THE REV. J. A. JAMES.

"I wish to say to you, Knill—labour for Jesus Christ as long as you have breath in your body."

VENNING THE PHILANTHROPIST.

REVIEW.

In some of the paintings of the old masters there is the work of more hands than one. The more important and prominent subjects of the picture were elaborated by the artist who designed the piece, while the subordinate parts were left for others to finish. Something like this occurs in the memoir of Richard Knill. My friend, Mr. Birrell, has given us the portrait, and has requested from me, as one who knew the original, to supply some of the fillings-in of the picture; and I could not feel at liberty, in the present instance, to decline this labour of love. The subject of the memoir was so well known to me, and, on account of his great devotedness and usefulness, held by me in such affection, esteem, and even reverence, that I feel honoured in paying this tribute of respect to his memory, and in recommending his example to notice and imitation.

The biographer has performed his office with judgment and fidelity, and has given us a condensed account of one of the most useful ministers of his age. He has left him to speak for himself and tell his own story; and though we cannot but regret that he did not leave behind more details of the varied scenes through which, in his changeful and eventful life, he passed, yet more than enough will be found for admiration and direction. In this age of diluted biography, consciousness is so rare that we are content to take a work which is the essence of a man's life instead of a weak solution. It will be found, even by those who knew some of the facts before, a work of deep and instructive interest; and it is so correct a likeness, that, had it been possible to conceal the name of its subject, it would, like one of those truthful portraits which are without inscriptions, have been recognized by all who were familiar with the original.

Mr. Knill was no ordinary man. His usefulness in the way of conversion of souls to God was perhaps greater, all things taken into account, than that of any other man of his day

in this kingdom. Wherever he laboured, whether in the villages of Devon, in India, in Russia, or in the various parts of England, he was instrumental in awakening the impenitent and careless to a deep concern for their eternal welfare. He entered every place with that object in view, and in very few instances left without having in some measure accomplished it. His usefulness lay not exclusively among the poor : many persons of education, intelligence, and station were brought, through him, under the influence of evangelical religion. How seldom has the individual been found, since Whitfield's and Wesley's time, of whom it could be said that there was reason to believe he had been *the instrument of converting a hundred persons who, in one way or another, became preachers of the gospel!* This, added to the multitude of other persons who by his instrumentality were brought to the Saviour of the world, is an amount of usefulness which rarely falls to the lot of any minister of Christ. It proves that he, above most, was "wise to win souls," and that "God was with him."

Surely it should become with all, and especially with the ministers of religion, an inquiry by what means this amount of usefulness was accomplished. Such a man's life should be a study; yet it is to be feared that, in this age of "intellectualism," many will deem it beneath their notice. True, he had no splendid talents, no brilliant genius, no lofty imagination; he possessed neither scholarship nor philosophy; he was neither an acute metaphysician, nor an accurate logician, no, nor even a profound theologian. But he was something greater, higher and holier than all this,—he was a devoted servant of Christ, a hero of the cross, an eminently successful preacher of the gospel. He made no pretence to greatness; yet, if saving souls be a great work, he was great. He made no attempt at display; he coveted not, he attempted not to be philosophical or intellectual, yet he was master and preacher of the profoundest of all philosophies, and the deepest of all intellectualisms—the gospel of salvation. He was no orator, in the conventional meaning of that term, yet had he the power of rousing, fixing, and holding the

attention of an audience, far above what most elaborate and intellectual preachers possess. He was no rhetorician, nor, if eloquence consists of great and original conceptions clothed with glowing imagery and splendid diction, could he pretend to this: his eloquence was that of the heart, gushing out in streams of impassioned feeling, which carried away his hearers on the tide of his own emotion—the eloquence of a man on fire with zeal for God, and melted into compassion for souls hovering on the verge of the bottomless pit—the eloquence of faith and love. Like Paul, he was a man of tears, and often drew forth the tears of others by the magic power of his own full eyes and faltering voice; or, like Paul's Master weeping over Jerusalem, Knill would often weep over the audience before him. The minister who would turn from the delineation of such a man because he had no claim to be a genius, or a subtle reasoner, or an original thinker, or a poetic sentimentalist, or a dreamy mystic, and was nothing but an earnest preacher of the gospel, has reason to doubt whether he knows that the salvation of souls is the great

object of the Christian ministry, and is above all scholarship and all philosophy. It is much to be desired, then, that this work should be read by our whole ministry, to see what may be done even by a man of moderate abilities, whose heart is set in him to be useful, and who is inspired and moved by the purpose of saving souls.

We now take up the inquiry after the means by which he attained to so great a measure of usefulness. It is evident that it was, in a great degree, to be attributed to *his intense desire after it.* He set out in life with the adoption of that mighty, impulsive, and glorious word, USEFULNESS; and usefulness, with him, meant converting sinners. He yearned for the salvation of souls. It was, with him, not merely a principle, or a privilege, but a passion. For this he longed and prayed in the closet, wrote in the study, laboured in the pulpit, conversed in the parlour, and admonished, counselled, and warned wherever he went. It was his conviction, that his talent and temperament were more especially adapted for the work of conversion, and thence his sermons contained

invariably a large portion of the truths which conduct to it. They were to a considerable extent made up of first principles, and were not so much calculated for leading on a congregation to perfection. As regards the pastoral style of preaching, it is by no means necessary or proper that this should be its character to the exclusion of more instructive and profound teaching. Few of our congregations are mere nurseries for babes who are to be fed with milk; in most of them there are Christians of full age, young men and fathers, who require strong meat; and, therefore, Mr. Knill, though valued as a preacher, cannot be held up for indiscriminating imitation. What we desiderate is more of his simple, direct, earnest, heart-affecting method of address, grafted, as much as possible, upon a more enlarged and enlightened course of pulpit ministration.

It is, I think, an error into which many of our modern ministers, whose education has been carried to a high pitch, have fallen, that every thing is to be done by the head rather than the heart. We know very well that the

true method is to reach the heart through the head, and that men must be made to feel by being shown why they should feel, and what is to make them feel. But in very many cases, especially in the least educated, the head is to be reached by appeals to the heart. We often hear the remark, "Yes, it was a clever sermon, but it wanted heart. It sparkled like the stars, or shone like the moon on a wintry night, but it warmed no one." I have been sometimes struck, as every one else must have been, with the varying effect produced by different speakers at a public meeting; and how much more power over the audience, and how much more the object of the meeting has been accomplished, by a few gushes of simple eloquence from the heart of some earnest and ardent advocate, than by the elaborate but passionless pleader. The latter was coldly admired, and admitted to be an eloquent speaker; but the former melted and moved his audience by the depth and intensity of his own feeling. And as with speaking so it is with preaching. Mr. Knill often did with a few touches of genuine emotion what others could not do with great and lengthened elaboration.

It must be conceded, that the unction of a warm-hearted preacher depends, in considerable measure, on natural temperament; a man must have an emotional organization to be an emotional preacher; and it is, after all, a miserable exhibition when an excess of emotion is brought forward as a substitute for a deficiency of intelligence, and tears are made to supply the place of thoughts. I am not quite sure that our friend did not occasionally border on this deficiency. His tears, the fountain of which was always full and always open, like those of Paul, were a part of his power, and often gave irresistible effect to what he said; but now and then they enervated his address.

The usefulness of Mr. Knill, however, was not exclusively the result of his preaching. The passion for the conversion of souls which he manifested in the pulpit, and which led him to seek it with such earnestness there, he brought with him out of the sanctuary, and carried into more private spheres, as the great object of life and principle of action. Like the enthusiastic botanist, geologist, or entomologist, he was ever in pursuit of his object,

and looking out for fresh means of gaining it. It was his felicity to have rarely to say, "*I have lost an opportunity.*" How few, how very few of us have attained to this watchfulness for occasions of usefulness! Our friend, no doubt, had a peculiar tact for this way of doing good—a talent which exists in various degrees in different persons, but which ought to be, and may be, cultivated by all. Whether it was the servant girl that waited upon him in the house of a friend, or the host and hostess themselves, or the fellow-traveller in the railway carriage, or the porter at an inn, or a person he casually met on the road, or a sailor on the sea-beach, he had a tract or a word—generally an *apt* word—for each. In every one, he saw an immortal being on his passage to eternity, and he longed to be the instrument of his conversion. Oh, what multitudes would be converted to God, and how changed would be the face of society, if all ministers and all Christians were thus set upon the work of saving souls! And why should they not be? True, they may not have Mr. Knill's tact for the work; but they may do

much if they have the heart to do it. Something, no doubt, may in his case be set down to natural temperament. He was impulsive, eager, active, and possessed of great sensibility. He had an ardent, and, if we may so say, an outgoing soul. Then there was dauntless moral courage and an unflinching boldness of address: witness his distribution of religious tracts, while yet a youth, to the North Devon Militia; his venturing into the company of ungodly and sneering officers in India, when he knew their object in inviting him; and his occupancy of the theatre, and his preaching in a series of towns in his old age. He knew not fear in the service of his Master. This is a noble quality of soul, and an important aid to usefulness. We should all do more good if we had more of this spiritual heroism. Before such a man the proudest spirits "stand abashed and feel how awful goodness is." Have we not all too often quailed before those whom we have felt afraid of assailing even with the weapons of argument, persuasion and love, and have come away from the company of some whom we should have tried to save, with the

shame and self-reproach of a spiritual coward? I am fully aware that it requires great delicacy and caution how we thus aim to do good by introducing religion to those whom we casually meet, lest we disgust and affront by our apparent rudeness, and rouse the prejudices of those whom we wish to conciliate. I am not quite sure that Mr. Knill was always judicious. There were instances, I believe, though rare, in which he was a little too abrupt in his address, and perhaps sometimes "cast his pearls before swine." Yet he never merged the politeness of the gentleman in the zeal of the Christian; and there was an honesty, a frankness, a kindliness of manner in him—such an obvious benevolence of intention, such affection beaming in his looks, such a tone of tenderness in his words, such an unmistakable design and desire to benefit the persons he addressed, that it was almost impossible for any one to whom he spoke to be offended with him. We must beware of a species of knight-errantry in religion, and of that spiritual garrulousness in which some very talkative professors indulge, who measure their

zeal by their volubility, and who are regarded by all who know them as religious bores or pharisaic zealots. But oh, what an enviable talent is tact in doing good by private conversation with those into whose society we are casually thrown! By many, I know, the introduction of religion in the way of personal address, especially if the person he treated as unconverted, is considered as a breach of good manners and a mark of vulgarity; and too many pious people, and ministers also, yield to this conventionalism, and pass through life without ever attempting thus to do good. But can this be right? Is it not a cowardly, guilty silence? If we have found the secret of happiness for both worlds, should we not in all proper ways seek to make it known to others?

There was another way in which Mr. Knill extended his usefulness, and that was by writing and publishing short, striking religious tracts, as well as reprinting some that had been written by others. His own contained no great depth of thought, and nothing that displayed genius; but, generally founded on some fact, they were eminently calculated to

engage the attention and to interest the feelings of the reader. They obtained, he tells us, a circulation of some *millions*, were translated into several languages, and were greatly honoured for the conversion of souls. It was his own pithy saying, "*One tract may save a soul ;*" and in thousands of instances his, by God's grace, have done this. The man who writes one good, popular, useful religious tract, has done a work worth living for, though he did nothing else. There is a time coming when the author of "The Swearer's Prayer" will have more joy in his simple leaflet than Milton in the production of "Paradise Lost." Why then do not Christian writers more frequently try to send over their own land, and over more lands than one, those winged messengers of mercy by which, under the blessing of God, they shall convert souls while they live, and speak for the same purpose when they are dead? It must be confessed, however, that peculiar tact is necessary for such a work. The man who could write a large and learned volume would in some cases, find it difficult to write a good popular tract ; just as he who

could forge an anchor might not be able to make a jewel or a pin! But are there not many who could do so if they tried?

It is not always that such ardour in the way of doing good as Mr. Knill evinced is associated with and guided by such discretion as he generally manifested throughout the whole of his career. Impulsive and sanguine temperaments are always liable to erratic movements; and many a fervent spirit is set on fire and consumes itself by the velocity of its own unchecked motion. Zeal, like fire, needs to be watched and kept in its own place, or, instead of warming the house, it may burn it down. No one can read the foregoing pages without being convinced that Mr. Knill, with all his impetuosity in his useful career, was singularly guided by wisdom. Ever active, amid the jealousy of the Russian Government and the vigilance of the Greek Church, he never fatally committed himself. He knew well, what is not often the case with ardent minds, how to direct and when to limit his zeal. This, as well as his watchfulness for opportunities of usefulness, and his eagerness

to seize them as they presented themselves, was finely manifested in his exhumation of the Russian Bibles from the vaults in which they were buried, and fast going to decay; and also his extensive sale of Bibles to the Finlanders. He thus did an immense amount of good without alarming the fears or awakening the suspicions of the authorities. How important is it, in all our endeavours to be useful, to study the *best way* of being so! Zeal should have eyes and ears as well as hands and feet; should keep both open, and make good use of their testimony.

What kept Mr. Knill thus active and ardent in his career of usefulness was his fervent piety. If he had a tongue of fire, it was because the flame of devotion was bright and ever burning in his soul. Few men in modern times entered more deeply into the apostle's words, "The love of Christ constraineth us." By this, as a torrent, which he was as little able as he was willing to resist, he was borne energetically and successfully along in his course. He lived within sight of the cross, and felt the "powers of the world to come."

His diary exhibits the springs of his action, the source of his energies, and the secret of his success. He was eminently a man of prayer, and did everything in the *spirit* of prayer. His communion with God was close and constant. He came from the closet strengthened for his work in the pulpit and in the city, and went back to his closet, not only for repose and refreshment, but to be strengthened and prepared for further labour. This made him "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." And why are any of God's servants feeble in action, but because they are weak in devotion? We live in days when Christians are far less in the closet than they should be. The study and the counting-house encroach upon the closet. We are preaching men and business-men, but not so much as we should be praying-men. What mighty men in prayer were our great ancestors, the Howes, the Owens, the Baxters, and the Henrys! How they must have wrestled in the closet to send forth such words as they did from the study! Where is their mantle? Doddridge and Watts found it, and dropped it again for such men as

Payson, M'Cheyne, and Knill. They, in their turn, let it fall. Would God we could find it! What is wanted among us is a deeper-toned piety, a more devotional spirit. Oh, for a fresh baptism of the Holy Spirit—a revived ministry, and a revived Church—a race of preachers and of people whose whole character and conduct shall bear, in letters which every one that sees must read, the inscription on the mitre of the High Priest, "*Holiness to the Lord!*" We complain of a want of usefulness. Have we any reason to wonder that we should have cause to complain? Is our piety such as to make us burning as well as shining lights? Are we as intense in devotion as we are earnest in business and in study? We should all be more useful if we were more holy.

It will perhaps be asked, if I would hold up Mr. Knill as a standard by which all should be tried, and a model which all should imitate? In some things I would. In his singular devotedness, and consecration to his work; in his deep conviction and clear perception, that the salvation of souls is the great end of the

ministerial office; in his intense desire and constant endeavour, in all ways, to reach this end; in the prevailing evangelism and earnestness of his sermons; in his eminent piety and devout spirit; in his loving disposition and kindly bearing; in his simplicity, fidelity, and courage,—in all these things I would commend his example as what we should endeavour to copy. Still it would be unfair and unwise to expect that all should in everything exactly resemble him. Most men have idiosyncrasies, and he had his, which do not belong to others, and should not be slavishly copied by them. The God of nature had much to do in the constitution of his mind and tendencies, as well as the God of grace with the sanctification of his heart. Very few could do exactly as he did. And is not the wisdom of God manifested in that variety of talent and gifts which is apparent in the ministers of Christ, so that as there are great differences of mental habitudes among the hearers of the gospel, there should be corresponding differences among its preachers? Let not, therefore, the readers of this memoir make comparisons between its

subject and their own pastors, and querulously and unthoughtfully say, "Ours are not as he." Perhaps not, and yet they may be very good ministers still. Nevertheless, that his burning ardour for the salvation of souls, and his unwearied endeavours in that work, might and should be possessed by us all, is very true; and I am not without hope, that this volume has its mission to stir us up to a spirit like his own.

In the retrospect of a long life, now drawing to a close, during which I have watched, of course, the career, and observed the mode of action, of many of my brethren, I have noticed great diversity in the results of their ministry; and I have most assuredly seen, that where they have been intensely earnest for the salvation of souls, and have sought this by a style of preaching adapted to accomplish it, God has honoured their endeavours by giving them success. If, without impropriety, I may refer here, as I believe I have done elsewhere, to the service which, during fifty-four years, I have been allowed to render to our great Master, I may declare my thankfulness in being

able, in some small degree, to rejoice that the conversion of sinners has been my aim. I have made, next to the Bible, Baxter's "Reformed Pastor" my rule as regards the object of my ministry. It were well if that volume were often read by all our pastors,—a study which I now earnestly recommend to them. I sometimes venture to hope that it has kindled in me a spark—but oh, how dim!—of that spirit which actuated Mr. Knill. In regard to all that constitutes earnestness, I blush before his statue, as it rises before me in this volume, and confess my shortcomings in the work of the Lord. Standing, as I now do, in the prospect of the close of my ministry, of the eternal world, and of my summons to the presence of the great Lord of all, the salvation of souls, as the object of the ministry, appears to me, more than ever before, in all its awful sublimity. Everything else, as compared with this, seems but as the small dust of the balance; and though, perhaps, not altogether an idler in the vineyard of the Lord, it is now my grief and my surprise that I have not been more devoted and more laborious.

Defects, omissions, and errors, come out before our view in the evening of life, and especially when it is spent, as mine now must be, in retirement, solitude, and suffering, which we did not perceive during the burden and bustle of the day. To my younger brethren I say, You are engaged in the greatest work in the universe; for in preaching for the salvation of souls, you are brought into fellowship with God in His eternal purposes of mercy to the children of men; with our Lord Jesus Christ in His redeeming work upon the cross; with the Holy Spirit in His mission to our world; and with prophets, apostles, and martyrs. Heaven, through eternity, will resound with the praises of your diligence, or hell with lamentations and execrations upon your neglect. Happy will it be for you, and happy for your flocks, if the perusal of this volume should help you to find and to wear the mantle of Richard Knill. J. A. J.

SEPTEMBER, 30, 1859.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHILE the proofs of these concluding pages, accompanied by the Preface, are yet returning to the press, the public telegrams announce to all parts of England that their venerated writer is no more. The intelligence will travel to the utmost limits of our language, and be told, at length, in all the tongues in which his heart-stirring thoughts have ever been read,—filling thousands with such sorrow as springs only from the loss of a father. With what solemnity does this event stamp these his last utterances! A life completely filled with labours for the highest welfare of mankind could not surely have been more fitly closed. It seems as if his Lord, with touching kindness, had given him this latest opportunity of bearing testimony to the importance and blessedness of His service.

A bound set of the sheets of this Memoir

were sent to him about a month ago, with little hope that he would be able to add to them. But, after glancing over the volume, he was so warmed by the kindred spirit of Knill that he resolved to throw his generous impressions into writing. His continual sufferings greatly increased the difficulty of composition, and, after doing his uttermost, he wrote to say that the result was so unsatisfactory to himself that he could send nothing. But immediately after the despatch of that decision he happily changed his mind, and sent the manuscript, accompanied by an expression of the hope that it would be found so unsuitable as to be returned. It was, however, too much prized to be so treated; and, with a very few alterations, it reached him in print on the day prior to his departure. He at once proceeded to its revision, in the course of which he detected several inaccuracies in the printing, which had escaped other eyes, and inserted two or three qualifying words. This was his last work on earth. He felt that it was; for as soon as it was finished, he wrote to the Editor, with unusual distinctness of penman-

manship, as if every word had been deliberately weighed, a letter—it is presumed his last—of which the following passage is the chief part :—

Edgbaston, 30th Sept., 1859.

" . . . I think it probable that with these few notes on dear Knill's life and labours I shall lay down my pen, which has written much : would God it had written better ! But while I say this, I am not without hope, yea, I I may add, conviction, that it has, in some measure, written usefully. In some humble degree I have aimed at *usefulness*, both in my preaching and writing, and God has, to an amount which utterly astonishes and almost overwhelms me, given me what I have sought. It seems a daring and almost presumptuous expression, but with a proper qualification it is a true one—that usefulness is within the reach of us all. The man who intensely desires to be useful, and takes the proper means, *will* be useful. God will not withhold His grace from such desires and such labours. Oh, my brother, how delightful is it, notwithstanding the humbling and sorrowful conscious-

ness of defects and sins, to look back upon a life spent for Christ! I thank a sovereign God I am not without some degree of this."

In an hour or two after this letter was sealed, the summons came from his Divine Master, and when next morning dawned upon us he was with Him in glory. May *his* mantle be found and worn by thousands!

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BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Knill, Richard

The life of Rev. Richard Knill, of St. Petersburg Being sel. from his reminiscences, journals, and correspondence. [Hrsg.] by Charles M[orton] Birrell. With a review of his character, by the late John Angell James

New York 1860

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